Wings of Wax and Feather

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Wings of Wax and Feather

by BelladonnaWyck, raiast

Summary

"Did you just smell me?"

"Difficult to avoid. My apologies, I didn't realize there were any Omegas in this section of the prison."

"Most get sent to the Omega Holding Facility two counties over. But then, most don't get done in for rippin' out an Alpha's throat in the middle of the street."

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Hannibal Lecter had always known the winding road of fate may one day lead him straight to a prison cell. He'd never imagined he'd find his true mate there.

Notes

This fic ultimately has a happy, fluffy ending. But there are a lot of darker themes, especially in the first half. Be mindful of the tags, and we will also give chapter warnings for particularly dark chapter content!

Extra note: This is a completed work and will be posting twice weekly on Sunday and Thursday!

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"In the case of the State of Louisiana versus Hannibal Lecter, the court finds the defendant guilty of justifiable homicide by excessive force. You are hereby sentenced to five years in prison, with the possibility of parole after three years."

Hannibal knew that he could have been sentenced to life without parole, perhaps even have obtained the death penalty, under different circumstances. He knew that, when all was said and done, the potential of five years due to excessive force was a mere blip compared to the backlash that would befall him had his particular proclivities *actually* come to light.

All the same, the verdict sat heavy and bitter in his gut. In the span of mere seconds, Hannibal saw every opportunity that might have been afforded to him slip right through his fingers; no operas, no dinner parties, no hunting or arranging exquisite tableaux for up to five years. His truffles and organic produce would be replaced with mass-produced, low-cost cafeteria meals. His extensive collection of prestigious vintages would become water and weak coffee and, if he grew desperate enough - Hannibal was certain he never would - toilet-wine swill.

He processed this information in the space of a blink, and then the handcuffs were being placed around his wrists once more and he was guided out of the courtroom.

He allowed himself to be led to the transport vehicle without fuss. At any other time, Hannibal could have easily overpowered his escort - even with his wrists and ankles bound with the thin metal chains that confined him - had it not been for the suppressants that he had been forced to consume since his apprehension six weeks prior. A thin layer of haziness had settled over his mind, dulled his natural Alphan strength and speed, deadened his instincts to bite and tear and consume.

He could feel the shadow within him, prowling back and forth with discontent like a caged animal; waiting for its moment, teeth and claws itching for blood. He could feel it studying the situation with feigned passivity, powerless to spring forward to save itself or the fleshy sack it inhabited from their fate of captivity.

He allowed himself to entertain the passing thought that he *would* overcome the guards, that he'd rip the throat out of the one closest to him - a skittish Beta who seemed almost able to scent the very real danger Hannibal posed on the air like a coming storm. He imagined the warm spray of his blood, how it would drip heavy and ruby red down his chin and stain the bespoke suit he'd been allowed to wear to trial.

Imagined taking his hands and wrapping the handcuffs around the thick neck of the Alpha on his other side, twisting *just so* until it snapped and he fell to the ground to join the pool of his partner's blood where it splashed vibrant and thick on the metal beneath their feet.

And then he blinked and the image was gone, the two guards sat talking easily amongst themselves, ignoring Hannibal where he was chained to the floor of the carrier van.

The processing was surprisingly quick, though unsurprisingly degrading. He was stripped of his clothes, searched *extensively* for contraband hidden upon his person, and then a jumpsuit was pushed into his unwilling hands, a tragic poly-cotton blend in a shade of watered down blue so faded that Hannibal shuddered to consider how many inmates had donned the apparel prior to him.

He followed a slender correctional officer to his cell - the place that he would call home for at least the next two or three years, unless his lawyer could prove herself worthy of her retainer and finagle him into an early parole. The man didn't speak to him until they arrived at the opening to the small room, muttering a quite sardonic sounding *welcome home* before abandoning Hannibal completely.

Hannibal stepped into the small space, absolutely despising the fact that the bundle of bedding and pillow that he held against his chest felt like a makeshift, threadbare shield. His cellmate was already sprawled out on the bottom bunk, a lithe Alpha with blonde, chaotic locks and a perverse hunger in his wild, blue eyes, tinged with Alphan red. Pink, pouty lips pulled up into a grin that was both mocking and insane as he sat up and eyed the new arrival with unbridled enthusiasm.

"Mason Verger," he introduced himself; Hannibal did not miss the fact that his name was spoken almost like an afterthought, as though Hannibal should already be well-acquainted with who he was.

Unfortunately, Hannibal's lawyer - one Margot Verger - had let Hannibal know upon his sentencing that it was quite likely he might come face-to-face with her terror of a brother. He gave the other Alpha a blank stare as his eyes, ears and nose took in every scrap of evidence possible to paint a more complete picture of the Verger heir. He was disconcerted to find that Margot may not have been exaggerating about her psychotic brother.

He tipped his head in a stiff nod. "Hannibal Lecter."

"Yes," Mason drawled, he cocked his head to the side as he studied Hannibal even more blatantly. "My sweet sister was defending you. As useless to you as she was to me, I see. No worries, no worries," Mason chuckled, as though Hannibal had replied with something that had completely *tickled* him. "You and me are going to have some *good, funny* times," he assured Hannibal.

Hannibal was certain that would prove not to be accurate in the least.

There was a hierarchy in prison that Hannibal found frustratingly familiar. It reminded him of his youth, of cold nights on a stone floor, of a constant ache in the core of his being that food couldn't fill and fire couldn't warm.

More than anything, it made his skin prick with the phantom touches of unwanted hands always gripping too hard, his stomach clenching with each new, sharp reminder.

It was easy enough for the first week to simply retreat into his memory palace, committing each loathsome face to memory before sinking into thoughts of a time when Mischa wasn't just a little bird beating her wings in the safer corners of his mind or the bone cage of his chest. When they would have tea parties and she would make tea so abysmal that even Hannibal struggled to remain stoic at the bitter flavor.

She had been a tiny terror, knowing fully the sway she held over Hannibal. But her terrorizing was stained with love. She'd been as fascinated by Hannibal as he was by her, but neither had ever felt like a moth pinned to a board.

After the first week, his wings were frayed from being pinned and unpinned. Mason, in particular, had taken to tormenting him in a myriad of new and evolving ways. Hannibal had to uphold a calm, peaceful demeanor during his incarceration if he expected to return to his old life fairly unscathed. He needed to be on his best behavior to qualify for the early parole for which his lawyer was so desperately fighting.

Which meant he absolutely could not fight back. And Mason, it seemed, thrived on bullying those he deemed weak enough not to fight back.

"Hannibal," the pout that turned Mason's lips down was drenched in his particular mix of neuroses, his eyes flat black with how large the pupils had grown, like the eyes of a shark. "You know how upset it makes me when you go to the shower without me. I feel like you don't even *like* me, Hanni. I thought we were becoming best friends."

He snapped his fingers and two of his cronies were suddenly on either side of Hannibal, gripping his biceps in bruising holds and pushing him flat against the shower wall, belly pressed tight to the cold tile.

Hannibal fought the instinct to wrench himself from the slippery grip of the two brutes caging him in and focused on breathing through his mouth rather than his nose, as it seemed apparent that activities such as these were the closest the men usually got to the showers. He closed his eyes and attempted to retreat inside. He nearly made it through his foyer of the Norman Chapel before the brush of Mason's hand down his spine in a mockingly tender caress ripped him back to the present; back to a grimy, steam-filled room, back to the reality where he could only imagine lashing out with teeth and claws to claim a pound of flesh from his tormentors.

Back to where he was about to be raped. *Again.*

He grit his teeth against the surprised yelp that threatened to leave him at the first impact; the sharp crack of flesh on flesh split through the white noise of spraying water before the sting of the slap even permeated his awareness. It wasn't a half-hearted effort, nor was it the worst pain Hannibal had ever endured. It was the absolute degradation of being *spanked* that stung the most.

"Little old for your tastes ain't he, Mason?"

It wasn't the first time others had been present in the showers while Mason had his fun. It *was,* however, the first time anyone had so much as acknowledged what was happening. Hannibal couldn't fault the other inmates their inaction; he suspected most of them were simply relieved that the mad man's attention wasn't focused upon themselves.

"Willy boy!" Mason crowed in his sickening sing-song tone. "Have you met my new pet - ahaha, *roommate?*"

Hannibal's silent seething was interrupted as Mason's hand fisted tightly in his wet locks and yanked his head around to face the newcomer. *Boy* was right; the young man must have been sixteen if he was a day.

Sharp blue eyes swept over him with disinterest. "How do you do," the boy muttered a perfunctory greeting before he turned his attention back to Mason. "I'm here for a shower, not to listen to you get off. Scram."

And surprisingly, *amazingly,* Mason backed off. He gave Hannibal's hair one more fierce tug before he released him and nodded at his cronies to do the same. "See you at supper, Hanni," Mason purred as he stepped away. "I'll save you a seat!"

Hannibal ran his hands down his nude front as though smoothing out a rumpled suit rather than collecting himself after such a near incident. He put himself to sleep at night imagining all of the varying ways he would end the lives of every pig who had touched him or even looked at him suggestively while behind these walls. He had never been prone to daydreaming, but the last several days he'd even found himself becoming lost in bloody thoughts of righteous retribution. Elevating these cretins to something otherworldly.

"Hannibal Lecter," he said by way of greeting, as the boy made his way to the button on the wall that would reactivate the timed showerheads. He didn't step back as the lukewarm spray began to rain down on them both, letting the water roll over his body and take the filth of Mason's touch with it.

The strange man looked at him from the corner of his eye before reaching around himself to offer his wet hand. "Will Graham. My daddy always taught me to shake hands with a man when you meet them for the first time." he looked around the room with a slight smirk. "Sure he wasn't imagin' a settin' such as this, but I reckon it's more about the man than the surroundings."

"He sounds like a decent man," Hannibal returned the handshake, surprised at how firm Will's palm was clasped around his own.

"He was a piece of shit and now he's a dead piece of shit. Saw to it myself," and there was a dangerous glint in Will's eyes that Hannibal recognized immediately, his own monster clawing at the bars of its cage to get a closer look. *Kindred.*

"One should always endeavor to remove the rude from the mortal coil."

"Careful what you say in here, *Hanni*," Will's tone was taunting but also soft, something sad and far too close to pity hidden there for Hannibal's comfort. He bristled at the idea that this

child felt sorry for him. Though just from Will's demeanor he could see the boy had something to prove. A cursory sniff provided Hannibal with more insight into exactly what that was. He was *Omega.*

"Did you just smell me?" Will's voice held no malice, he sounded more intrigued and amused than angry at the action. Hannibal enjoyed the slight lilt to his words, the lazy vowels and elongated endings. Most likely local, then.

"Difficult to avoid. My apologies. I didn't realize there were any Omegas in this section of the prison," Hannibal stepped closer to the spray of water, closing his eyes and letting the water soak his hair and face.

"Most get sent to the Omega Holding Facility two counties over. But then, most don't get done in for ripping out an Alpha's throat in the middle of the street."

The casual way such a declaration was uttered sent a shiver through Hannibal, even as he stood in the stream of water growing ever warmer. He pushed wet bangs from his face and turned, casting a furtive glance over to the young man as he did so.

Will Graham had a slender frame that was typical of most Omegas, though his shoulders were a bit broader than average and, nude as he was, Hannibal could see a hidden strength in the wiry muscles of his arms and legs. The Omega probably looked quite innocuous when fully clothed. But Hannibal could imagine it as clearly as if it were a memory of his own: that sweet-looking, young Omega turning feral, eyes flashing gold with his ire as he launches himself at his target, locking his little fangs into a grown man's throat and bathing in the blood that pours forth as he rents and tears.

For the first time in weeks, Hannibal felt the barest hint of arousal coil warm in his belly. He pushed the thoughts away and focused on lathering up with the substandard soap provided for him - soap that technically left him with a fresher scent but failed to feel as though it rinsed out completely, lingering on his drying skin and making him feel dirtier than before he'd started. He wondered if Margot could possibly see to getting him something of a higher quality; wondered how long he might be able to keep such a thing from Mason.

"I feel as though I should thank you," he said at last, "for intervening."

The soft sigh that sounded over the water drew Hannibal's eye back to his company. Will flashed him a sad grimace of a smile. "You're quite new, aren't ya? Listen, don't thank people for things in here. Gratitude implies reciprocity and you don't wanna owe anything to anyone."

He ran hands through his dark, sodden curls one more time and then stepped back out of the water. "Not even me. Take care, Hannibal Lecter," he murmured, and then turned his back and strode from the room.

The prospect of being alone seemed like both a blessing and a curse. Privacy was not something often granted to one in prison. At the same time, Hannibal couldn't help feeling as though his protection from Mason walked out of the showers with the young Omega. He refused to dwell on that beyond the irritation that flared through him when he recognized it,

but hastened through the rest of his wash all the same. He would prefer as many layers between them as possible the next time he saw his *roommate.*

Hannibal ached. He supposed it was a small mercy that he could easily identify all of the areas that were the most painful; could tell he didn't have any internal bleeding or anything broken. Just a collection of mottled bruises, in varying shades from purple to yellow, littering his entire body - but only beneath where his prison clothes would hide them.

Mason was nothing if not invasive and cunning. He'd gotten away with his own preferred type of abuse of power for so long because he'd been so sneaky. Hannibal had learned in the few weeks he'd been here already that Mason had *accidentally* killed one of the young people in his care at his father's estate. The incident was clearly only accidental because Mason had gotten caught this time. Hannibal knew exactly the type of monster Mason was, knew he'd killed before and he would kill again. He got off on the power, and the abuse of it, and that made him dangerous.

Looking at Mason too closely brought back memories Hannibal would rather keep confined to the darker corners of his memory palace. In the crumbling, shadowed nooks that he never spent too much time in because they were filled with blood and the clear, sharp bell of childish screams.

Hannibal's distaste for the man only continued to grow as he seemed to ramp up his abuse. Mason didn't always come for Hannibal directly. There were times when Hannibal was cornered in the tight, shadowed hallway between the cafeteria and laundry facilities, a place that it was well known didn't have a camera. He'd disappear into his memory palace and envision the floors of the cathedral drenched in a red so dark it appeared black as the moon spilled in from the high, arched windows. He knew each name, each face.

"Hanni, you really must stop being so clumsy, silly goose. You'll end up breaking something if you aren't more careful!" Mason laughed into Hannibal's ear as he wrenched his arm painfully behind his back, holding it between their bodies. Mason was shameless as he rutted against Hannibal, uncaring about who might see. Hannibal could feel the hard line of his arousal where it rubbed against him through their jumpsuits.

In his memory palace, he sharpened the blade of his favorite Gyutou.

"We can't keep meeting like this, Mason. It's terribly inconvenient for me," a welcome voice drifted into the tight space of the hallway, filtering into Hannibal's mind and pulling him back into the present.

Will stood casually, hands clasped behind his back, as he watched. Mason took a few steps away from Hannibal's body, putting some distance between them when he saw Will standing so close.

"Willy! You wanna sample my newest piggy? I'm happy to share," Mason offered, his smile showing too many teeth and his eyes glinting with madness.

“I don’t share well with others. Only child and all,” Will commented dispassionately, flicking his wrist and calling forth two men, only one of which Hannibal vaguely recognized as a man named Randall.

“Why don’t you go find another corner of the prison to terrorize, Mason? I have business here,” Will’s tone left no room for argument. It wasn’t a suggestion, but a subtly worded order and Hannibal again found himself wondering at what had given such a young boy so much power over such dangerous men.

“Sure thing, Willy. Sure thing. I’ll just be taking Lecter here with me and be on our way, hm?” he yanked on Hannibal’s neck with a broad palm, and it took every muscle in Hannibal’s body to keep from lashing out with teeth and claws.

“My business is with Lecter, so you won’t be taking anyone. Goodbye, Mason.” Will gave a little wave with his fingers and stepped closer, forcing Mason to take a step back.

“Business with him is business with me,” Mason boldly attempted to argue, even as Will took another step forward and Mason echoed the movement. He seemed to know that the argument was futile, resignation already coloring the Alpha’s tone.

“I said: Goodbye, Mason,” Will reminded him softly.

Will stood silent and stoic, hands clasped behind his back and head cocked to the side ever so slightly as he stared down the nuisance until Mason cast one more lingering glance at Hannibal and then finally retreated. Hannibal opened his mouth, decorum automatically bringing a word of thanks to the tip of his tongue, but Will’s chin gave a slight jerk and he recalled the Omega’s words in the shower. He waited instead for Will to speak.

“Y’all should go on ahead,” he directed to the two men accompanying him, though his eyes never left Hannibal. “You’ll be late for work duty.”

They followed the command, again disguised as a suggestion, without a word in return to Will, nor even a glance spared in Hannibal’s direction as they passed by. When the door to the laundry room half a dozen feet down the hallway closed behind them, Will took another small step toward Hannibal.

“Was there something I could help you with, or was that purely for Mason's benefit?” Hannibal asked at last.

“You can help me,” Will gave a nod, leaned his weight against the wall beside Hannibal and folded his arms over his chest. “Sate my curiosity, maybe.”

Hannibal studied the young man before him - he had done so many times since their introduction in the shower, though always from afar. His dark hair fell in loose curls when not laden with water, the length just on the right side of shaggy as it fell across his forehead and down his neck. His eyes were just as they had been the last time Hannibal had been so close to him: a startling shade of blue, molded into something hard, full of sharp edges. Hannibal wagered that they would look quite breathtaking laced through with Omegan gold. His lips were pink, full, set with just a hint of a frown as his own eyes took in Hannibal.

He had the distinct feeling that Will was seeing much more than others did when they looked at him.

“In what way?”

“Tell me why you put up with it,” Will suggested softly, in that way he seemed to have that implied it was not a suggestion at all. “I reckon you could hold your own against most in this place - certainly against Mason - thoroughbred Alpha that you are. I’ve watched you, Hannibal Lecter. For awhile now. Others may see the way you tense up when you’re attacked and think it due to fear, but it’s not, is it? You’re stopping the instinctive reaction to protect yourself, to fight back. I see the predator coiled beneath, locked away by choice when we both know you could stop this - all of it - with just a few select actions. So why not set it free?”

“I imagine you’d know what it’s like to be afraid,” he was, perhaps, primed for a more reactionary response than his usual.

He was surprised when, instead of fury, he was met with a glinting dark humor and a chuckle. “Crude, Lecter. A bit hamfisted don’t’cha reckon?” He paused, absently picking at his thumb with his teeth, worrying at a frayed cuticle. “You won’t like me much if you psychoanalyze me. Just ask Chilton.”

“A professional curiosity, I assure you. I can no more turn it off than you can turn off your fascinating empathy. An excess of mirror neurons, even for an Omega, yes? Quite the useful gift.”

”Gift,” Will spat the word like a curse. “It ain’t been nothing but a hindrance to me all my life. Just another reason for people to single me out. Another disappointment for my daddy.”

“Your father is dead. I hardly imagine his opinion is worth much anymore.” Hannibal could see the gold flash across Will’s eyes in pleasure.

“Maybe worth something to the maggots,” and Hannibal knew Will wasn’t just referring to the creatures that feasted upon his father’s corpse even now, but also to the intricacies of his tenuous control over the men in his crew, even over those without it.

Hannibal imagined it was difficult to find clout when one was so much younger than those he was meant to lead. When his gender denoted he should be playing house rather than leading an entire criminal enterprise. He could see the lines already etching themselves around Will’s eyes and mouth. A man full of emotions and none of them joy.

He decided to answer his former inquiry. “I could be released early for good behavior. My lawyer is already working on procuring an opportunity for early parole. That would not be possible if I were getting into altercations.” He spoke calmly, placid on the surface like a lake teeming with predators underneath.

He knew that Will could see that. That the Omega had somehow managed to slip aside the veil that kept Hannibal separated from the world most of the time and he saw into the heart of

Hannibal. He may not yet understand what he saw, but with time Hannibal was sure Will would see him clearly.

"'Spose not all of us can be lucky enough to get here on blatant murder charges. Not much wiggle room for parole when your public defender can hardly be bothered to get off his ass and do his job," Will didn't sound bitter, which was even more curious to Hannibal than anything else. Almost as though he was content to spend his youth, spend the rest of his life, confined to a cell far too small to ever comfortably fit someone like Will Graham.

Hannibal was *fascinated.*

He wanted to suggest that an appeal for parole might be possible for him as well, with the proper lawyer - wanted to offer the use of his own, even, although he suspected that the expense was not the problem. He wanted to tell the young man that he had never met another of his ilk, to tell him that the dark fury that simmered beneath his Omega-soft skin only further served to fuel his radiance. There were a great many things that Hannibal wanted to say; they each buzzed to the forefront of his mind before being summarily dismissed.

"Won't you be late yourself, if you tarry much longer?" he asked instead.

A wry smirk twisted Will's pink lips and he shook his head even as he pushed away from the wall. "No one would dare to say a word, even if I am. We'll have to continue the session another time, Dr. Lecter," the Omega purred as he brushed past Hannibal, deliberately invading his space for the span of a second despite there being ample room to move around him.

Hannibal's senses were invaded by the cloying citrus of honeysuckle and magnolias, of spruce branches heavy-laden with the first, clean snow of winter. He followed the direction of its source, nostrils flaring to capture another breath, to pull across his soft palate the sugar-water sweet scent of honey along with fresh herbs and, beneath it all, the loamy undertones of damp, fertile earth and brackish Bayou. Home and comfort. The Omega obviously hadn't showered that morning, his sweet, natural scent unencumbered by the harsh chemicals of prison soap.

Brazen, for a young Omega to strut about a prison full of Alphas smelling like that, even considering the daily suppressants tamping down the instinctive urges to chase and claim. The shiver that rippled down his spine surprised him almost as much as the warm, pleasant clench of his stomach. He did his best to erect a room in his palace to save the scent, even as the stale sweat and detergent from the nearby laundry room began to overtake the fading ambrosia.

When he opened his eyes, Will Graham had opened the door to the laundry room, disappearing through the entrance with a cheeky wink in Hannibal's direction.

The thing about life in prison - and Hannibal's torment specifically - was that there was a distinct lack of beauty to balance out all of the ugliness. He himself was well adept at seeking out such balance, as evident in his hobby of taking the gruesome horror of death and

elevating it to an aesthetic that was more pleasing to the eye and soul. He had always been one that was drawn to beauty, both conventional and not, and was quite skilled in finding it in the most unlikely of places.

The only beauty he had found during his stay thus far was Will Graham, and that was, unfortunately, a beauty best observed from afar. Mason was never so vicious to him as he was directly after the instances where the young Omega had dared to interrupt his fun. Both of the evenings in question had brought Hannibal no rest and left him with a limp that lasted for days.

He considered approaching Will regardless, certain that whatever wrath Mason could dole out to him would be more easily endured with the phantom of Will's sweet scent in his nose and comely face behind his eyes. He withheld from the temptation, growing more uncertain by the day that he could keep himself from snapping Mason's neck in the dead of night.

Margot Verger was a breath of fresh air; one more beautiful thing to shine through the darkness of this new existence. A hardy plant growing up between the cracks in the cement of her lot in life.

"Ms. Verger," Hannibal's smile was genuine as the well-dressed woman took a seat across from him at the table. Since he was meeting with a lawyer they were permitted a private room where his wrists were shackled to the gleaming metal between them.

"My brother didn't give you that," was her greeting, her eyes roving over him with a little frown pulling her red-painted lips down and furrowing between her brows. She looked pointedly at the very obvious bruising around Hannibal's right eye and took her seat, smoothing her skirt underneath her thighs as she adjusted.

"A message from him delivered through a proxy, of course. Mason is always on his best behavior. A perfect cellmate." If Hannibal were a man capable of rolling his eyes, it would have been at this moment.

Margot's frown deepened. "I am sorry for my brother, Hannibal. I wouldn't wish Mason even upon himself."

Hannibal waved the concern away, leaning back in his seat to cross his legs, resting the ankle of his right leg against the worn fabric of his left.

"I have a more important matter to discuss," Hannibal smiled, white teeth bright in the drab room. "Do you know of Will Graham?"

Her eyebrows drew up her face at the inquiry. "Everyone knows Will Graham. His father was Beau Graham, head of the Gulf Coast branch of the mafia. His mother was Isabella Lucchese."

Hannibal *did* recognize that name. A prominent family representing the mafia's presence and interests in the US.

Margot continued. “High profile case a little over a year ago. One of the quickest I’ve seen be taken to trial and have a verdict. He was a minor but they tried him as an adult. It was a shitshow of a defense. He ripped his father’s throat out in broad daylight. Defense claimed they couldn’t do anything.”

“But you could do something,” Hannibal pressed, leaning forward a bit in his seat.

Her eyes flashed golden in her pleasure at the implication that she was worthier. The Omega was starved for praise and affection, though equally desperate to ignore it. And while Hannibal didn’t intend to bring any harm to her, he would certainly press his advantages where he could.

She recovered quickly, shuttering her expression, though he could see her hesitation. What he was suggesting was not something that happened often in the legal world. If she tried to start an acquittal and failed, she would lose clout.

He decided to perhaps play a bit dirtier and more heavily handed than he usually preferred. “Will has been a balm to me within these walls. He has, surprisingly, kept your brother at bay more often than not. He seems like a good young man who was cast a bad lot as an Omega with a powerful father,” he pushed at what he knew was an old bruise, yellowed and weathered around the edges within Margot’s mind. Being an Omega caught between powerful men, Alpha men who had dictated her life for years, was something she was intimately familiar with and could relate to.

She pulled her bottom lip between her teeth, a nervous habit that she couldn’t seem to shake. “I suppose I could take a look at his file. Maybe request a meeting…” she trailed off, her mind no longer with Hannibal, but off somewhere else, planning and plotting.

“Any resources that you need, please add them to my invoice.”

Margot pushed her chair back and stood with an easy grace that would make any Omega jealous. She hesitated as she smoothed out her skirt once more. “If Will Graham is so helpful, why see him released early?”

“Call it an unspoken act of reciprocity. In any case, I imagine under your best efforts I will be away from here and on with my life before we know it.”

The woman studied him with a shrewdness that he’d become very familiar with in the previous weeks, though Margot lacked the malicious glint that sharpened her brother’s eyes. “Are you trying to court him?” she asked at last. Blunt and to the point as always.

Hannibal rewarded her with a ghost of a smile. “I hardly know the young man well enough to pursue that course of action. And, as it stands, prison would be a terrible place indeed for such an endeavor, wouldn’t it?” He could see the wheels turning in her clever mind, perhaps attempting to discern whether she should take his words at face value or not. “Thank you, Margot. That will be all.”

He watched as the young woman knocked on the door to signal her release, waited patiently for the correctional officer to release his wrists from their bindings. Margot’s question spun in

endless circles through his mind as he stepped through the hallways, and Hannibal was uncharacteristically surprised to find that the idea of courting Will hadn’t even crossed his mind.

One doesn’t generally need to court their true mate, after all.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! 'Til next time! 💚💜

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

“You have a visitor,” Matty announced.

Will scowled and flapped a hand in his direction idly as he turned his attention back to the chessboard. “I’m not expectin’ nobody.”

“It’s a lawyer,” the CO expanded. “Not yours. Margot Verger.”

Chapter Notes

We're back and so excited about this story - and the incredible response it received - that we decided to release this chapter a little early!

A big, HUGE thank you to all of you that sent your kudos and wonderful comments our way, as well as to everyone that followed us on social media and participated in the polls for our upcoming works!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Inmate!”

Will froze as the unfamiliar voice barked after him, cast a glance over his shoulder and recognized a CO that had started at the prison earlier that week. Clearly he hadn’t learned much as of yet.

The dark haired Alpha advanced on him, spine straight to appear taller, shoulders squared and chest puffed out to fill more space - the usual Alpha posturing bullshit. Will fought the urge to roll his eyes as the CO strutted up to him, coming to a stop far closer than he needed to be in an obvious attempt to hover and intimidate.

“Graham, isn’t it? Aren’t you supposed to be on work detail right now?”

He was, in fact, supposed to be in the laundry room. But the late Spring weather had been far too tempting, and Will had tarried too long in the courtyard, breathing in the sunlight and basking in the crisp air. It normally wouldn't be an issue, but this particular CO had either not been informed of who he was, or felt that he had something to prove.

He gestured toward the hall he had been about to turn down. "I'm going now."

"You should *be* there now," the Alpha bit out gruffly. "I have half a mind to take you to the Warden himself to explain your tardiness," he threatened, as though Will were actually afraid of Jack Crawford.

Annoyance surged through Will, hot and prickly, and he fought the desire to tell this new CO exactly that: that he wasn't afraid of him, or the Warden, and he could go fuck himself for daring to think that he held any power over him. He fought the urge to show this man *exactly* what had happened to the last Alpha that had believed such a thing. He tamped down on the desire to strike forward with claw and fang until this pathetic, posturing fuck was as still as his daddy had been, eyes wide with shock and painted in crimson that flooded the street around him.

"Oh, hey! Hey there, how's it goin', Will?"

Will blinked back to the dimly-lit hallway of the prison, turned his attention to the new voice cutting in, tone full of a near desperate need to diffuse the situation. His lips twitched into an almost involuntary smile at the Beta's presence as the tension melted from his frame. He couldn't stop the reaction if he tried - something about Price's personality just set Will at ease.

"I'm tryin' to go to work," Will informed him, eyes cutting to the nuisance of an Alpha still standing far too close for his own safety.

"Of course, sure. Hey, why don't you go on ahead? I've gotta talk to Zeller, here." Price waved him on casually as he dropped a hand to his fellow CO's shoulder, his usual beatific smile stretched across his lips and a plea in his dark brown eyes.

"Yeah," Will nodded, took a step away from the Alpha and closer to the laundry hall. He could see the moment Price's apprehension morphed to relief. "See ya round, Price. Zeller."

He turned fully without awaiting a reply and headed towards the laundry room. He made sure to make a mental note to chat later with Price about the new CO, to ascertain if he was going to hop on board or if Will needed to seek out other means to keep Zeller out of his hair.

Hannibal had always had a very discerning sense of smell. He'd known his sister would present Omegan well before she had been old enough to do so, though he'd never said anything and it hadn't mattered in the end.

He'd been able to smell that familiar sweetness on the breath of one of their Alpha captors and had gone nearly feral killing each and every member of the troop that had killed his

family and taken his little bird from him.

None of this could have prepared him to react to the knowledge that Will was his true mate. The Omega had smelled to Hannibal like every example of true mates mentioned: like home. He'd smelled like safety, and a warm hearth and the smell of thick, fresh snow-laden spruce trees.

And his mate seemed truly and completely unaware of their connection, Hannibal's Alpha bristling at the thought that Will would or could *reject* them.

He'd taken to watching the boy from afar, though he wasn't unaware enough to assume he wasn't being watched in return. Will had just finished his work duty, settling down at a table near Hannibal's, the Alpha reading one of the few books in the prison library that wasn't in English or a ghastly harlequin. He watched from his periphery as Will sat with an air of easy confidence, waiting for one of the men who seemed to follow him blissfully, *an Alpha* Hannibal's mind provided unhelpfully, to set up a chess board.

Will gave a soft huff as he moved his knight to take the bishop. "Now you're just letting me win," he chided softly. His gaze flicked up from the board to the man across from him; a small smirk curled his lips as the Alpha visibly fought the urge to bristle.

"I told you I don't know how to play," Randall reminded him, glaring at the board for a moment before thoughtlessly pushing his rook forward to capture one of Will's pawns.

"Which is why you're learning," Will pointed out. He slid his own bishop diagonally across the board. "Poorly," he amended. "That rook was guarding your king. You just threw that protection away for a pawn that I woulda happily sacrificed next turn. Checkmate."

Randall gave a soft curse, and Will couldn't help the grin that split his lips. He leaned back in his chair and gave the Alpha an affectionate nudge with his foot under the table. "Your queen survived that time," Will pointed out. "Though that's probably because you were too scared to move her. Again," he nodded to the board, and Randall obediently reset the pieces as Will leaned back further and stretched out his limbs.

He would deny 'til his dying day that he was putting on a show for the Alpha sat not too far away, nose in a book but eyes occasionally darting to Will in a subtle flicker of movement that most people would miss. Will didn't miss anything.

"Graham."

Will glanced up at the newcomer, his grin stretching even further. "Matty," he purred. "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

Matty's brow furrowed as he shot a concerned look around the common area. "CO Brown, please, Will," he corrected quietly for the umpteenth time.

Will gave a soft huff. “No need to be so formal, Matty. We’re all close, aren’t we? Practically family.” His gaze flickered to the Alpha seated across from him, who was staring at the chessboard and doing his best to keep his head ducked as a damning shade of pink settled over his cheeks.

When he turned his attention back to the CO, he found, unsurprisingly, that his eye had been drawn to the other Alpha as well. Will wet his lips and bit back the desire to needle Matty further. How those two had managed to carry on the way they had with no one but Will finding out was beyond him - they were about as subtle as a barn on fire.

“You have a visitor,” Matty announced hastily, when he realized his gaze had been trained on his lover for far too long.

Will scowled and flapped a hand in his direction idly as he turned his attention back to the chessboard. “I’m not expectin’ nobody.”

It wasn’t unusual for Will to receive the odd visitor that wasn’t Bev. They were always uninvited, unannounced, and inevitably there attempting to broker some sort of arrangement with him. He’d lost count of how many times his insistence that all outside business be handled by Bev was ignored.

“It’s a lawyer,” the CO expanded. “Not yours. Margot Verger.”

Will sat up straighter in his chair at that information, the wheels in his head turning furiously. Why the hell would Margot Verger turn up to see *him?*

“Want me to send her away?”

Will shook his head and stood up, his curiosity piqued.

He could feel the eyes on him as he walked towards the area that led to the private meeting rooms. What could someone like Margot Verger possibly need from him?

He let one of his fangs hook on his bottom lip as he imagined she was calling on him to ask him to murder her disgusting brother. He’d gladly take the additional life sentence to rid the world of Mason Verger.

He stood outside the reinforced door to the room, waiting for the CO to open it for him. “Randall’s missed you,” Will took the opportunity to say, teeth gleaming in the low light of the hallway and his eyes glinting with mischief. “I can give the two a ya a bit of time, if you get yourself on laundry detail one of these days,” he suggested passively.

Matty responded with just as much indignation and embarrassment as Will had expected, and a chuckle escaped him as he made his way through the now open door.

“Mr. Graham,” Margot stood when he entered the room, and inclined her head towards the seat across from her. He decided to stand instead, leaning himself carelessly against the wall.

“Graham -” Matty shot him a pleading look, but Will’s answering eyebrow raise brooked no argument. He wouldn’t be handcuffed today. Matthew let out a sigh, closing the door behind

him as he exited.

Margot arched an unimpressed eyebrow of her own. “You hold quite the sway here, or so I’m told.”

Will gave a noncommittal hum. It wasn’t a secret. When the head of a crime family as large as his said ‘jump’, you asked how high or you died. That extended his sphere of influence enough so that he could live the remainder of his days pretty damn comfortably even behind these prison walls.

It helped his reputation that it was public knowledge what he’d done to his larger, more aggressive Alpha father. Ripping a man’s throat out got you a certain additional level of respect that was earned, and not simply bought or claimed by birthright.

“What can I help you with, Ms. Verger?”

“I spoke with Hannibal -” Will held up a hand, cutting her off.

“What does Doctor Lecter have to do with me?” Margot bristled at the interruption. Will let his mental walls down a bit to soak in some of what made Margot, Margot. He could see worry lines etched into the corners of her eyes and framing her pretty, pouted red lips. With a brother like Mason, Will could imagine all too clearly what sorts of things might keep a woman like Margot Verger awake at night. As if the angry scar that just barely peeked out from the collar of her blazer wasn’t indication enough.

“It’s just that he’d mentioned your previous representation and, well, the lack of care they took with your case. I’d love to discuss with you an opportunity to represent you for an acquittal.” She spoke simply and unfiltered, though Will could still read the hesitation in her body language. This hadn’t been her own idea, then.

“Listen, I’m sure you mean well, but I’m gonna hafta say no. I’m not interested in payin’ your fee or in seekin’ new representation.”

“No fees. Just an opportunity to fluff my resume,” she laughed, and the sound was uncomfortable and brittle. A woman not accustomed to positive experiences with frustrated men. He tried to settle his hackles a bit, tried not to let his anger show quite as much as he’d like. She didn’t deserve his ire anyway. But he could think of one certain doctor who’d be hearing from him.

“I’m not a charity case. Never accepted a cent of charity in my entire goddamn life, and don’t plan on startin’ now. And, far as I’m concerned, my daddy’s money can rot in the fucking vault.”

“Will -” she tried to reason, but he stopped her again.

“I’ll be takin’ my leave now, ma’am. I’m sorry to have wasted your time. I don’t believe we’ll be seeing each other again, so you take care now.” He pushed himself off the wall and started towards the door.

“My brother -” the words left her in a panicked rush, gave Will pause as he stood at the door, poised to knock to be released. Will didn’t move from his spot, merely cocked his head slightly to indicate he was listening. He waited for her to speak again for several long moments before she finally seemed to settle on an avenue to pursue. “Hannibal won’t fight back.”

Will took a moment to contemplate the stubborn Alpha. “I know.”

“There aren’t many people on this earth with the ability to keep my brother at bay. Hannibal tells me you’re one of them.”

Will did turn then, resting his back against the door and folding his arms across his chest. He studied the Omega still seated at the table, rigid in her chair. Her wide, doe eyes and the thin line of her mouth spoke of innumerable times when someone wasn’t there to hold Mason back from her.

“I’ve dealt with bigger bullies than Mason,” Will informed her, gave a soft huff, “Hell, I was raised by one.”

“If it’s not too much trouble, whether you want my help or not, I’d consider it a personal favor to me if you’d continue to look out for him.”

Will’s lips twitched into a grim smile. “You askin’ me to protect an Alpha twice my age?”

Margot Verger stood from her chair, smoothing out her pencil skirt and straightening the cuffs of her blouse. In the span of seconds she transformed before his eyes from haunted sister to stoic lawyer.

“I’m reminding you that you’re the only one who can.”

Will Graham knew he was proud, sometimes to an unreasonable degree, but he felt wholly justified in his anger when he cornered the meddling Alpha early the next day.

“So you’re a fuckin’ nosy prick *and* a creep, I see.” Will nearly growled, crowding Hannibal against a blind corner in the laundry hall.

“I beg your pardon?” The man had the audacity to appear almost confused by Will’s anger, which only fueled him further. Will didn’t often get physically violent, but he flexed his claws into the crumbling mortar of the wall behind Hannibal to keep himself from punching him in the mouth.

“Your fuckin’ lawyer, Hannibal! Why the ever-lovin’ *Hell* did you send Margot Verger after me?” He whispered the name, even in his anger not wanting to have Mason overhear.

The Alpha smelled amazing and it was damned distracting. Will shook it off, his vision going a bit hazy around the edges as his eyes threatened to flood with Omegan gold.

“Will, I apologize to have upset you. But I thought you would want an opportunity at your freedom?” Will took a deep breath, which was a mistake as his lungs were filled with the other man’s smell; willow trees growing out of fertile Bayou soil, summer sun on honeysuckle, woodsmoke. Smells of home and comfort.

It couldn’t be. Will refused to be tied to anyone, *especially* an Alpha. He had no interest in mating. In *breeding*. “Well you fuckin’ thought wrong. Stay outta my business, Lecter, or we’ll be havin’ some problems.”

The threat was obvious, and Will only lingered a second too long before he pushed himself away from the wall and the Alpha still left silently leaning against it.

He was adrift in a sea of red, the salty copper tang of blood still sharp and cloying in his mouth as he choked on it, something wrapped around his ankle and pulled him under the waves.

His body broke the surface again and he saw a flash of white slashed against the ruby red waves. An arm. When he came up again, sputtering for breath, he was able to blink some of the blood from his eyes and see.

A woman, brown curls framing her face like some Victorian noblewoman, and eyes the color of the ocean at dawn. Will knew her by scent - even over the coppery burn of the bloody sea - even if he couldn’t see her. She smelled like seagrass and warm summer nights. She smelled like home.

He reached out for her when he saw her lips moving. He couldn’t hear anything over the crashing sound of the waves against the shore, but he kicked his legs in a frantic effort to reach her. Each motion he made seemed to only bring him further and further away.

Between one blink of his eyes and the other she was gone, replaced with a recently familiar face. The chiseled nose and sculpted cheekbones and whiskey soaked eyes of Hannibal Lecter.

Will woke sweating and trembling, which wasn’t all that surprising. His dreams had never been *entirely* pleasant, but the last year especially had seen his sleep disrupted by countless nightmares, full of demons from his past and apparitions of souls that damned him for his uselessness, even though he’d never possessed the ability to save them.

It was mornings like this that had Will conceding that the influence of his family name was something to be appreciated from time to time. He couldn’t imagine retaining as much control within these walls as he did if there existed a cellmate to spread the knowledge that, more often than not, the young Omega whined in his sleep and woke panting for breath with tears in his eyes.

He rolled off the lower bunk, rubbing his face on his way to the sink before turning the tap and bringing a handful of the freezing water to splash against his face, and then another across the back of his neck. He had a piss and then meandered over to his door. It was early

yet, because they were still on lockdown and his door had yet to be opened. A glance out the small window showed just the barest hints of natural light filtering in from the high windows.

Barely after dawn, then. There would be easily another hour before the rest of the prison would be waking, another half hour after that before it was time for breakfast. Will eyed the rumpled, sweat-laden sheets twisted up on the top bunk. He considered stripping out of his soggy uniform and climbing into the fresh, dry sheets on the unused lower bunk.

He recalled the dream that he woke from and shuddered at the consideration that he might fall right back into it.

He shucked off his uniform and laid it out on the top bunk to dry, certain that sleep would not find him again - certain that he didn't want it to. Instead, he set to work on his morning workout routine. He would have plenty of time to hit the showers before breakfast, after all. He forced his exhausted body through his reps of push-ups and sit-ups and knee lifts and squats, pouring his concentration into his form and his count.

He did not think about why Hannibal Lecter had appeared while he dreamt about his mother.

He was still irritated over Lecter's presumption in sending his lawyer to Will's aid, still perplexed as to why the man had shown up in his dream, so when he returned to his cell after his shower only to be greeted by the lingering scent of the Alpha, Will couldn't understand why anger eluded him.

He stood at the entrance to his cell for a moment, eyes slipping closed as he breathed in a scent both familiar and foreign, comforting and inciting. When he took another step in, he was greeted by the presumed reason for Hannibal's visit.

A dainty but elegant chain of flowers had been placed very deliberately on his pillowcase, the gentle, delicate curve of each paper petal folded meticulously and flawlessly. Upon stepping closer and gently lifting the origami from his bunk, Will could see that Hannibal had somehow managed to find a thin twig to affix each flower to in order to create a perfect stem of dogwood.

His throat felt thick with emotion even as his lips twisted into a small smile, and when Will held the paper flowers closer he was certain he could smell the pungent fragrance as though he was a boy yet again, passing the trees on his way home from school.

He considered the gesture - an apology of sorts, he was certain - and decided that he wasn't quite so upset with the Alpha after all.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! 'Til next time! 💚💜

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> *“Why have you been so kind to me? I’ve nothing to offer you in return; it would seem you have all you could possibly desire.” Hannibal stepped up to the table and pulled a jumpsuit closer, animating his body out of the predatory stillness that was his default.*
>
> *“Why’ve you been so sweet on me?” Will shot back in answer, avoiding the question entirely.*

Chapter Notes

> Just a heads up - This chapter contains a scene with graphic depiction of rape and physical abuse. It is in the final scene of the chapter and will be denoted by ~~~ so it can be skipped if that is your preference.
>
> A great big thank you to everyone that has left kudos, wonderful comments or simply just hit that subscribe button! The support this story has gotten has been absolutely overwhelming!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal was a patient man, but Mason Verger was testing his ability to remain apathetic. Hannibal was detached, not defined by his trauma. But even he couldn’t stop the way his fingers twitched when Mason crowded into his space. Or the way his eyes traced the other man’s movements around a room, a predator watching as a rival circled their territory.

Mason seemed to have an endless ability to hurt others, both on his own and through a never ending rotation of inmates who were more than willing to win the favor of a Verger by following along with his manic whims. He didn’t have the sort of easily respected control that Will exuded without effort, but Mason had power - agency outside the walls of the prison that could affect the lives of the inmate’s loved ones - and therefore he had fear, a far more dangerous motivator for men like those found here.

“Hanni, sweetheart, can you be a dear and fetch me my notebook,” Mason was on the bottom bunk, flipping loudly through the pages of a magazine. Hannibal *did not* sigh as he unfolded himself gracefully from where he’d been perched on the top bunk, climbing down and crossing the small space to collect the notebook. “No, no silly. Piggies don’t have hands.

Better use your mouth, we both know you know how to put it to use," Mason chuckled to himself as though he'd said something terribly funny.

Hannibal's Alpha snarled, enraged at the suggestion that he could be brought so low. He could endure the physical and sexual abuse, could withstand the humiliating displays that Mason put him through as the other inmates bore witness. He would take it all in stride, knowing that in a few short years - hopefully even less - he would be away from this place while scum like Mason were fated to rot away until they finally stopped imposing their miserable existence on the rest of the world. Perhaps Hannibal could even arrange for an accident to befall Mason shortly after his release. The right promises to the right inmates could prove fruitful, after all.

"*Hey,*" Mason barked, snapping Hannibal from his inner thoughts and melting his frozen stance. "I told you to *do* something, little piggy. Hop to it."

Hannibal was finished. He absolutely would *not* carry this man's belongings to him like some sort of *pet.* He took a moment to compose his features into something less scathing before turning to look at Mason.

The other man snapped his fingers at him and made an impatient gesture with his hand.

"No," Hannibal denied at last. His tone was soft and low, dangerous, the black rage burning within him barely kept at bay. "No, I don't believe I will."

Mason seemed more caught off-guard by the fact that Hannibal's defiance did not arrive in the form of rabid violence or raised voices, but rather in quiet refusal, than the fact that it arrived at all. His magazine was cast aside as he pushed himself from his bunk, taking an angry step toward Hannibal with insanity glinting in his eyes.

Before the shorter Alpha could even draw himself up to full height - as though that would actually intimidate him - Hannibal pressed forward with a step of his own, laying his palm broadly over Mason's throat and moving the little beast back down to his bunk with a gentle pressure. His monster gnashed its teeth, filling his mouth and throat with a burning, acidic anger that Hannibal swallowed down bitterly. He did *not* snap Mason's neck, though the desire thrummed just beneath the surface, electric and nearly overwhelming. Instead, he schooled his features, bringing himself back to a level of calm that was difficult to maintain but nonetheless necessary for his eventual release.

He did not wait to see what further reaction he had garnered from his abuser. Instead, he dropped the notepad to the ground and walked out of the open cell door.

He had a strong suspicion as to where he would find the one he sought - he had noticed the increasingly frequent games of chess between Will and Randall Tier over the last week or so - but all the same, Hannibal simply followed his feet, certain that he would get to where he needed to be; he was constantly drawn to the Omega by some inexplicable force, a magnet ever seeking the polarity that Will exuded. Hannibal hypothesized that he could have found Will blindfolded and disoriented with very little effort. It was simply one more piece of indisputable evidence that the Omega was his true mate.

Predictably, he found himself in the common area, a room with a few scattered tables bolted to the cement floor, and made his way to the far side, where Will was - also unsurprisingly - playing a game of chess with Randall.

He could feel the eyes of the few gathered inmates on him as he strode across the room before coming to a stop beside where the game was very clearly being won by Will. Though it seemed no one had told Randall that fact as he excitedly moved a rook across the board to claim one of Will's own.

"Doctor," Will said by way of greeting, eyes not leaving the board in front of him as he easily swiped Randall's rook with a pawn and set it to the side to join a long line of others.

"Back to formalities?" Hannibal inquired with a small smile. Will hadn't spoken to him for nearly two days after he had made it clear to Hannibal how little he appreciated the implication of charity.

"I'm speaking to you. Consider it a step in the right direction," the Omega murmured, eyes sliding in his direction at last.

And with that, combined with the knowledge that his dogwood had been placed reverently upon the small table in the corner of Will's cell - as a strategic stroll past Will's open cell had revealed the day before - Hannibal felt any lingering uncertainty melt away. Before he could open his mouth to state his business, however, he found himself rudely interrupted.

"Who let you outta the cage?" An inmate whose fists Hannibal had grown intimately familiar with over the last several weeks jeered at Hannibal from a nearby table. He could tell from the restless energy in the room that Mason was no longer in their cell, but he refused to look over his shoulder to confirm.

"Far as your concerned, Doctor Lecter is free-range, Gibbons. Fuck off."

The burly man grumbled but stood from his seat, casting a menacing glare at Hannibal as he shoved past him to leave the room. Behind him, he could hear Gibbons mutter something to Mason about keeping his pet on a leash. Anger simmered through him with renewed force, pushing him to speak the words his pride had kept silent for weeks.

Before he could, Will glanced up to the clock and pushed back from the table. "It's time to get to laundry detail."

Randall Tier made a despondent noise at the announcement. "But I was winning!"

"No, you weren't," the words were spoken in sync by the both of them, and Will glanced up to flash Hannibal an amused smile.

He didn't have time to analyze the sensation of warmth that blossomed in his chest at the sight, as it was quickly overtaken by a bitter panic at the realization that Will was *leaving.* Will was going to work, and Hannibal was going to be left *alone with Mason* again.

Hannibal took a half-step closer as Will stood from his chair and stretched out. “If I may have a quick word before -”

“There’ll be plenty of time to talk during our shift,” Will interrupted, turning to level him with a flat look. Hannibal stared at his eyes, breathless, as he heard all the things Will didn’t say. *Follow my lead. I won’t leave you here. Trust me.*

When Will gave a short jerk of his head and sauntered away, Hannibal fell into step next to Tier and trailed after him with a hammering heart. He could feel the burn of Mason’s eyes upon him, could already sense his rage building with every step away that Hannibal took. He would face Mason’s wrath that evening, perhaps worse than ever. Following behind the young, confident Omega, Hannibal found that he didn’t much care at that moment.

They walked in silence until they reached the laundry room, and then Will spun around to face them and dole out his commands. The room was muggy and hot, full of the smells of chemicals that stung Hannibal’s nose and almost deafeningly loud with the whirs and rumbles of industrial machines. Even so, Will’s words rang out clear, though the young man barely raised his voice.

“Go make sure dryer three is working properly today. I get one damp load, I want maintenance down here *immediately.* I’m not gonna be runnin’ behind all day again just ‘cuz those lazy shits can’t get off their asses and do their jobs.”

Randall nodded and strode away, turning the corner around the row of industrial washers headed towards, presumably, where the dryers resided. Then Will’s attention was on Hannibal, and though he’d not had any problems hearing Will over the din the first time he spoke, Hannibal found himself leaning in eagerly.

“You’re with me today. I’ll show ya the ropes.” He gave a glance up and down Hannibal’s person, his eyes flashing playfully as a wry smirk twisted his lips. He reached out to pluck at the fabric covering Hannibal’s arm. “You ever actually do laundry before, or is this your first ensemble that’s not dry clean only?”

Hannibal found his mouth mirroring the shape of Will’s. “A time or two,” he conceded, which earned him a soft chuckle as the Omega turned away and strode down the length of the room.

Hannibal spent the next thirty minutes glued to Will’s side as he explained the laundry process from pick-up to drop-off, the chemicals they used, and the various quirks of several of their outdated, patched-up machines. At least a dozen other inmates moved around them going about their work seamlessly, pausing here and there for a comment or command that Will spared them and following the directives immediately.

Will’s sphere of influence was apparent in every corner of the prison, but here, especially, everyone was willing - eager, even - to fall in line. The loyalty and obedience seemed to stem from an odd combination of fear, respect and Will just being genuinely beloved. Hannibal

mused that these inmates might take a command from Will even before they would roll over for the Warden.

Finally, he led Hannibal through a door at the back of the massive room to a smaller area, where the noise was greatly diminished. He pointed out a door in the far corner, guarded by a dispassionate looking CO, which evidently housed all extra chemicals and supplies.

They passed a row of laundry carts filled with freshly laundered uniforms and approached the large table along the back wall where a single man worked at folding them and placing them in neat stacks in an empty cart to his right. Hannibal could see the way the slim man's movements were jerky with tremors from several feet away. As they drew closer, he could hear the soft whine building in his throat and could smell the acrid flood of an Omega's distressed pheromones even over the artificial scents of the cleaners.

Will approached slowly from the side, so the man could detect his presence in his peripheral vision, and then, with a practiced motion that was both cautious and confident, laid his hand over the nape of the Omega's neck and gave a soft squeeze. He removed his hand and took a half-step back before he spoke.

"Why don't you take a break, darlin'?" Will suggested softly. "Go have Price let you into storage and get some quiet for a bit." The man gave a jerky nod and mumbled out a small, stuttered word of thanks. "I'm workin' on getting you someplace quieter, with less people." Will told him, "Promise."

Hannibal waited until the Omega was approaching the guard in the corner and stuttering out a request for entry before he stepped up to Will's side at the table.

"He doesn't belong here," Will murmured as both of them watched the CO unlock the door for the inmate without a hint of hesitation. Hannibal wagered that this occurrence was commonplace. "Don't believe for a hot minute he did what they say he did."

"What do they say he did?"

Will gave a sigh and continued folding the uniform the other Omega hadn't had a chance to finish. "Raped and murdered sixteen women."

Hannibal let his eyes linger for a moment longer on the now firmly closed door of the storage room. Even with the heavy suppressants they'd placed him on, he still had a sensitive sense of smell and could scent the slowly calming hormones of the distressed Omega.

"Peter couldn't hurt a fly," Will continued before seeming to think better of it, cutting himself off. "Guess you get to learn foldin' today, darlin'."

Hannibal was not a man accustomed to terms of endearment. But the words seemed to flow effortlessly and without forethought from the Omega's lips, and Hannibal found he couldn't disparage him for it. It wasn't like the barbed pet names Mason used as a way to degrade or show ownership. These were gentle, almost fond.

Hannibal cleared his throat, a small yet human habit that he had developed over the years to make those around him more comfortable. “I know you have advised against gratitude, but I cannot help but notice that you seem to aid many here without any apparent reciprocity. I am sure my cellmate thanks you for his continued good health.”

Will’s eyes flashed Omegan gold as he considered Hannibal openly, brazenly. Like most things the Omega did, he was unapologetic in his obvious appraisal.

“*You* on the other hand. You also ain’t here for what they say, are ya? Or, at least, I reckon that ain’t all you *shoulda* been done in for.” Will’s eyes were still streaked through with gold, his pleasure apparent. How curious that his empathy afforded him such striking insight into another, and yet he showed no fear or apprehension about Hannibal’s assumed crimes.

“My only crime was hubris,” Hannibal lamented wryly, “Like Icarus, I flew too close to the sun.”

“You got some wings hidin’ under that fancy jumpsuit, Doctor Lecter?” Will taunted, a smirk pulling his lips wide and exposing a flash of his white teeth beneath as his hip swayed to the side to bump playfully against Hannibal’s.

Hannibal returned his smile, his own nearly feral with pride. How intriguing this boy was. He hadn’t been surprised, pleasantly or otherwise, in quite a long time.

Before Hannibal could form a response, Will was speaking again. “You’ll be working laundry with me from now on. Suits on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Every Thursday we do bedding and everything else.”

“And on the other days of the week? What shall I do then?” Hannibal chuckled in reply.

“Whatever I tell ya to, I imagine.” Will’s smile was teasing but also final in his judgement. There was no room for argument here. Hannibal found himself nearly in thrall to this boy, unable to find the desire to even try to argue. Will’s confidence was a heady thing, filling Hannibal with a curious combination of exhilaration and security. He was loathe to turn away from the warm buzz that simply being near the Omega instilled within him.

“Why have you been so kind to me? I’ve nothing to offer you in return; it would seem you have all you could possibly desire.” Hannibal stepped up to the table and pulled a jumpsuit closer, animating his body out of the predatory stillness that was his default.

“Why’ve you been so sweet on me?” He shot back in answer, avoiding the question entirely.

“I find you fascinating.” Hannibal paused, considering. “Is that it for you, then? You are interested in me because of something you perceive through your empathy?”

“Nah, Doc; I don’t find ya that interesting, truth be told.” Will’s eyes sparkled with mischief and Hannibal could almost scent the lie.

He hummed in reply, before answering. “Apologies, dear Will. I am sure that can be amended.”

Will's grin grew so wide that his eyes nearly closed with it. Over the toxic and caustic chemicals that left a perpetual itch in his nose, Hannibal caught the sweet and heady scent of an interested Omega.

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Mason's retribution for Hannibal's refusal and subsequent escape from him that morning came even more swiftly than Hannibal had expected; Mason was incapable of playing a longer game than his compulsive and reactive personality could allow, after all.

The rape had been fully expected. Hannibal was not overly attached to his body; he could easily exist outside of it, or deeply enough within it as to be removed from any situation, be it painful or otherwise. The creative torture had been a bit of a surprise, though. Hannibal barely had time to spare a thought to *how* Mason had come across a matchbook, or a toothbrush sharpened to a dangerous point, but he had.

He had also somehow managed to interfere with the locking mechanism on their door as well as the cell door of two of his larger lackeys, which is how Hannibal found himself pinned to his stomach on the cold cement floor by his biceps and his calves, while Mason mounted him like a beast. While Mason delighted in defiling Hannibal with an audience, his favorite times were when they were tucked away in their cell and Mason could knot him to prolong the torment. He did so this time, and used the reprieve to light matches that he then put out in an array of lines all over Hannibal's back and sides.

Each one brought a faint sizzle and the acrid smell of burning flesh and hair. Eventually, Mason used the flames of several matches to heat up the makeshift shiv before drawing a crude design on Hannibal's flank. He couldn't see what it was, but he could take a guess from the shape that it was a V. *Verger.* Branded like one of the pigs his family was known for.

Mason let out a satisfied sigh as he eyed his work and then gave two sharp, appreciative taps over the damaged tissue. Hannibal bit his tongue so hard to hold back his whimper that he tasted copper.

"*There* we go!" Mason purred, and then took to trailing a finger back and forth over the blistering lines of Hannibal's brand. "I don't have to worry so much about you running off, now! Someone's *bound* to find you and bring you back home. No matter *how* disobedient you try to be."

Mason didn't wait for his knot to fully go down, forcibly pulling out of Hannibal's clenched hole with a low grunt and moving off of him before coming around to crouch down by Hannibal's head, which he lifted from the hard floor with a rough tug of his hair. "Now that *that's* settled, we can set to your punishment. See, your misbehavior this morning left me in a pretty *foul* mood. I'm sorry to say, I had no choice but to take my anger out on my friends here," Mason tipped his head towards the two men still pinning Hannibal to the ground.

Hannibal had noted when they'd crowded into the door an hour earlier that one of them was the owner of a raw, red line bisecting his eye, the other with an array of new, stark bruises littering his face.
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“They *suffered* because of *your* actions, Hanni,” Mason gave a forlorn sigh. “How are you going to make it up to them?” He tightened his grasp in his hair until Hannibal was sure some of it was being torn out at the root, and then released him all at once with a nod to the others.

A moment later, Hannibal could hear the creak of Mason stretching out on his bunk. “Try to keep it down, hm?” he directed to the room at large. “I’ve had a *terribly* trying day and need to get some decent sleep.”

Hannibal did not sleep that night. He journeyed through the Uffizi Gallery and along the Arno with an Omega that smelled like sunshine and smiled with his fangs. He did not return to where his body trembled, bloodied and broken, upon the cold floor of his cell until a correctional officer found him there the following morning.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! 'Til next time! 💚💜

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal frowned down at him. “You want me,” he declared, certain that he hadn’t misread the situation, nor the unmistakable scent of the unbonded Omega’s interest.
>
> Will’s mischievous smirk flashed his gleaming fangs as gold-laced blue eyes danced with amusement. “So?” was his only reply, the monosyllabic response both a tease and a challenge.

Chapter Notes

> Thanks for sticking with us after the last update! Please don't hate us, we promise it gets better!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Embarrassingly enough, Hannibal was only able to remain conscious and coherent long enough to take half a dozen wobbly steps with the support of a correctional officer on either side of him before the haze of pain stabbing through him with every movement sent his vision black and he crumpled to the ground. When he later woke, it was to the smell of disinfectant and a familiar voice.

“You shoulda had him on somethin’ already and you know it. When he wakes up the pain’s gonna be unbearable.”

A disconcerted sigh met Will’s demand, softly spoken but insistent all the same.

“Will, you aren’t even technically supposed to be here. *Please* stop telling me how to do my job.”

A female voice, unrecognizable to Hannibal. He kept his eyes closed but scented the air as much as he could with half of his face buried in the pillow the way that it was; he could only catch the familiar scent of an infirmary and a weak whiff of Will’s sweetness, overwhelmed by the bitterly sharp scent of his concern and ire.

From the lack of a second scent, and based on their location, Hannibal assumed he was hearing the renowned Nurse Bloom. He’d heard more than one inmate joke about an unnecessary trip to the infirmary to spend some time with the supposedly attractive Beta.

“Do it better, then,” Will growled in response.

“I can’t administer any pain medication until he wakes up so I can assess his mental faculties and rule out a severe head injury -”

Hannibal tuned out the argument to do an assessment of his own, subtly flexing and extending his muscles as much as possible without drawing attention to himself. He was sore, to be certain, but it was not the most agonizing pain he had ever suffered. He was sure that his arms and legs were mottled with bruises from being held down so ruthlessly, knew also from the blood that had wet his thighs the previous night that there had been some rectal tearing as well. The smaller dots and lines of match burns tingled just enough to be aware of them; the larger brand ached terribly.

He supposed it was enough good fortune that his escort had thought to arrange him upon the bed on his stomach. Even the weight of the gauze that covered the mark was an irritating presence. He couldn’t imagine he would be lying on his back for several days at the very least.

A restless desire to speak to Will and his own curiosity as to why the Omega was present at all finally spurred Hannibal into action. He let out a heavy breath as he shifted, twisted his head around until the young man in question was in his line of sight.

Will looked *furious*.

He held himself with his ever-present relaxed disposition - his body devoid of tension and a stoic passivity painted across his features - but his sea glass eyes *burned,* even as his lips twisted into something resembling a soft smile upon seeing Hannibal awake.

“Hey there,” he murmured. “Tell the lady you ain’t got no brain damage and she’ll give ya some real nice drugs,” Will assured him.

Hannibal let out a soft huff, did his best to hold back a grimace as he twisted his body onto his side to better face the Omega. “I won’t be requiring any pain medication, but your concern is appreciated. As my companion so elegantly has stated, I do not have *any* brain damage.” He gave a teasing smile to the boy in question, eyes glittering with his own brand of mischief.

Will drifted closer and took a tentative seat on the edge of the bed. “Ya know, if you didn’t wanna be on laundry detail you coulda just told me. Kinda desperate lengths you’ve gone to just to get outta work, don’t’cha think?”

Will’s grin flashed his fangs and sent a buzzing warmth through Hannibal’s cold and aching body. He was pleased to find that his heart was one muscle that had been spared bruising as it beat a little harder in his chest, even as his ribs ached with every breath.

“I’ve never been one for direct confrontation,” Hannibal rasped back, and Will let out a bark of laughter.

“Will,” Nurse Bloom prompted, and Will heaved an annoyed sigh but stood and retreated from the bedside. The woman took his place and gave Hannibal a brittle smile that reeked of pity. “Hello, Hannibal,” she greeted softly. “I’m Nurse Bloom. I need to run through the standard to check for a brain injury. I understand you’re a former surgeon so you’ll be familiar with this process.”

“As you wish,” Hannibal allowed when he realized that Nurse Bloom was seemingly waiting for his permission to proceed.

Hannibal allowed her to go through her process, though he already knew that he would recover with minimal interference from the subpar prison infirmary. He had a few cuts he could not recall receiving, deep gouges along his upper thighs that seemingly had required stitches whilst he was unconscious. His worst enemy would be the brand - the possibility for infection in such unsanitary, close quarters was far higher than it would be elsewhere. He would need to keep an eye on it.

He found himself able to exist nearly completely in the marbled gold and blue swirl of Will’s eyes, absently answering questions as the nurse went down her list. He was clearly happy to see Hannibal well, but his anger still smelled fierce and close to the surface, like ash and embers fresh from a fire.

Will talked for the time it took Nurse Bloom to draw a few vials of blood and take them to a small ante-room for processing. Hannibal let himself drift on the soft lilt of Will’s voice, his accent nearly melodic in the small space the three of them were squeezed into.

Suddenly, a new scent overwhelmed the room, flooding Hannibal’s senses like acid. He turned his head ever so slightly and saw a burly Alpha with anger etched across his features standing in the doorway.

“Who the *hell* let Graham in here?” the Alpha demanded, stomping into the room and crowding the tight quarters even further.

The nurse returned from the other room, her hands up in a placating gesture. She gave a shrug in response. “He doesn’t listen, Jack.”

“Warden Crawford,” the man gritted out between clenched teeth. Words repeated often enough, it seemed, to be familiar to him. “He’s an *inmate.* If he doesn’t listen to directives, you call a CO to *remove* him.” A vein throbbed in his neck and Hannibal had a moment of consideration for his blood pressure before he felt a slight pinch to the back of his arm. He turned his head sharply just as Nurse Bloom was pulling away a syringe.

“I know you said you don’t need them, but I’m advising a dose now and one in a few hours. You need rest to recover.”

Hannibal could already feel the mix of drugs starting to drag him under, Will’s palm soft on his shoulder as he tried to soothe him.

“Out, Graham! Get the fuck back to your cell,” the Alpha shouted loudly enough to rouse Hannibal from the beginning tendrils of sleep. Anger prickled at the back of his mind, a

protective flair of disgust and possessiveness as this Alpha spoke so harshly to his Omega.

"'Ay Ay, *Captain,*" Will snarked, squeezing himself between the looming Alpha and the cot Hannibal was still laid upon. "Bye, Icarus," he tossed to Hannibal, eyes going momentarily softer around the edges as they made eye contact.

It was only a few moments more before he was lost to the drugs, the sound of the Warden and the nurse arguing the last thing he heard.

Will was *furious*. He hadn't felt this much rage since the day he'd killed his daddy; an Alpha hardly worth the anger and energy expended on ripping his lying throat out. Will should have taken his tongue too.

He realized he was pacing in the cramped cell he had to himself. His granny used to say *you'll wear a hole in the floor 'frettin like that*, but Will felt helpless. What had his protection amounted to for Hannibal in the end? A disgusting man's seed between his thighs and brand on his back? Will hardly considered that protection. He shouldn't have marked his claim so boldly so soon; not without first dealing with the issue of Hannibal's proximity to Mason. He had all but dangled Hannibal right in front of Mason before ripping him away, and then sent him right back to spend the night with that lunatic. Will could kick himself.

He worried at the frayed skin of his thumb, the cuticle already bleeding from where he'd been chewing at it for going on an hour. After Crawford had sent him back to his cell, he'd immediately started pacing. And planning. He needed to see Bev. They needed to talk about a certain pig.

As far as positive changes in the day to day life of an inmate went, the human right's activists were entirely useless. Their jumpsuits and bedsheets were scratchy and worn, their meals were bargain box, boil-and-serve fare barely a step up from MREs, most COs were still power-hungry knotheads that took the job for the physical, mental - sometimes even sexual - abuse it afforded them over their prisoners. Groups had been rallying for years to end the government-sanctioned forceful drugging vis-a-vis hormone suppressants - though Will didn't necessarily think that was entirely wise - with absolutely nothing to show for it.

In fact, these picketers and protesters had only been able to make one *real* change in the last decade that seemed to have any bearing upon prison life at all: visitation rights.

Back in the day, violent offenders would be subject to the old phone-call-behind-glass trope, which afforded zero privacy and allowed an abundance of bacteria to spread from inmate to sticky phone to inmate. Will hadn't been in prison back when Congress had finally decreed that it was detrimental to the mental and emotional state of an inmate to deny them the biological desire and need to scent their loved ones from time to time, so he had let the news pass him by with little interest.

Now, Will was grateful for the ability to walk into a room where his best friend awaited him; he didn't even mind being chained to their table, nor the three COs that watched the interaction from different corners of the room.

Bev waited until Will's escort had clasped the second cuff on him and walked away before standing slowly and walking around to his side of the table with telegraphed movements, so as not to make the COs nervous or suspicious. Will tilted his head up in greeting, his eyes slipping closed as Bev bent down to nuzzle her cheek against his, allowed him to bury his nose in her inky black locks and breathe deep.

Being a Beta, Bev didn't emit pheromones or enticing scents to attract a mate, but she still had a smell that was distinctly *Bev:* the same brand of lotion she'd been using for years that left her skin with a sweet smokiness, the scent of her citrus face wash and floral shampoo. It was a combination of smells that immediately set Will in a better mood, reminded him of home and safety.

He rewarded her presence with a soft purr that she couldn't hear, but no doubt felt vibrating from his throat. He was amused to see the intimate gesture brought a blush to her cheeks just as quickly as always. She swatted him lightly in chastisement as she pulled away and then returned to her seat on the other side of the table.

"We're not supposed to meet for another two weeks," she pointed out, ever down to business.

"I'm sorry to hear I'm such an inconvenience," Will rebounded with an expression of faux-offense that his smart little Beta probably didn't buy for a second.

Bev gave a soft snort, leaned back in her chair and folded her arms across her chest. "The *inconvenience* is getting strip-searched every time I come here by some security guard with a power trip. *Twice.* If you're gonna start subjecting me to that twice a month instead of once I'll be forced to join a gym."

Will leaned his elbows on the table and rested his chin on his laced fingers. "It's tough bein' in here. I've been craving bacon."

Bev's dark eyes flashed with mingled interest and surprise, though her face remained inscrutable. She let Will's words sink in for a moment before she replied. "I thought you were going vegetarian in here. No matter how tempted you got."

Will gave a half-hearted shrug. "If I learned anything from my daddy it's that a man's allowed to change his mind. The health benefits no longer outweigh the potential drawbacks."

"You know I'd do anything to help you out, even if it means starting a petition. You need me to contact anyone?"

Good girl, Will thought, gold flashing through his eyes to impart his approval to her. "Do that," he nodded, considered for a moment and then added. "Find out some fun facts about sows while you're at it. People like to be well-informed."

Bev nodded and stood. She had been Will's best friend for years, his right-hand in training until he slaughtered his daddy and gave them both a promotion - she no longer needed any obvious cue to understand she was being dismissed. Will tilted his head up to indicate that he wished to scent her one more time and Bev obliged.

"And bring me the Dragon," Will breathed into her hair. Bev's responding movement was a nuzzle and nod all in one.

Nurse Bloom had made apparent her lack of enthusiasm for Will invading her infirmary. She had also made apparent that she lacked the resolve, nor the constitution, to do anything about his breaking her rules.

So when the fancy struck Will to stop into the infirmary for a visit one evening after dinner, roughly a week into Hannibal's stay there, he was unsurprised when the Beta only cast him an irritated but helpless glance and then left him entirely to his own devices.

"Tell me you at least get a better meal, laid up in here as you are," he teased, eyeing the saddeningly familiar mess of brown upon Hannibal's dinner tray that passed for *salisbury steak* in this dreadful place.

"Sadly, no," the Alpha returned wistfully, giving the gravy-slathered slab a dubious poke with his plastic fork. "I daresay I'd have found myself in here under voluntary circumstances weeks ago if that were the case."

"Eat up anyways," Will urged, the words falling softly from his lips. "Gotta get that strength up, Doctor."

"Feed it to me?" Hannibal suggested. Even as he teased, Hannibal's Alpha prowled in the back of his mind, drawing awareness to the fact that he had only attempted goading Will because part of him longed for his mate to provide for him. He expected a scoff, perhaps even a soft chastisement from the flirty Omega.

Instead, Will surprised him for what felt like the hundredth time, and plucked the roll from Hannibal's plate to break off a bite-size piece that he offered to him, placing it delicately against the Alpha's lips with a sly grin playing on his own.

Hannibal was helpless but to open his mouth to accept the offering, taking the stale bread into his mouth like a sacrament, his Alpha purring with contentment.

"Mason's in seg for what he done to you…" Will spoke into the warm silence that had stretched out between them, and suddenly the room went cold.

Hannibal gave a noncommittal hum at the information, taking it in and filing it away like he did all data given to him. Solitary wouldn't last forever. And Hannibal imagined Mason's ire would be three-fold after having been denied the ability to subjugate and terrorize the populace for an extended length of time

He was not a man prone to wishing or dreaming, but Hannibal *desired* greatly to end the pig's miserable existence. To remove his blight from the world and recreate him into something transformed, elevated into something beautiful, smoothing out his most grotesque edges.

"I'm workin' on gettin' you reassigned. But until then, your pain is at a nine, you hear me?" he gave Hannibal a knowing glance and nodded his head when Hannibal smiled at him.

"I do seem to be in a lot of pain. Perhaps you could work out some of the kinks from my shoulders?" Hannibal snapped the dour mood the consideration of Mason had brought on like a stormcloud, grinning wide enough to show his fangs.

Will stared at him, and for a moment Hannibal wondered if the suggestion - admittedly only *mostly* made in jest - had been a step too far. And then Will's lovely lips twisted into a wry smirk, his eyes narrowing in amusement, and he gave his head a jerk to indicate that Hannibal should make room on the bed for him.

He scooted forward, the tray of food in front of him completely forgotten as the Omega slipped behind him, his lean legs stretched out to frame Hannibal's body. Will's touch was confident, his slight hands settling without hesitation upon Hannibal's shoulders and kneading with an easy, rhythmic touch that felt entirely natural. His shoulders dropped immediately, the tension slithering from his frame as Will manipulated his flesh. The Omega's soft, warm breaths puffed slowly and evenly across the back of Hannibal's neck.

Will's hands slid from his shoulders to his back, one of them framing his scapula while the other dug fingers and knuckles into the taut muscle that lined the sharp edge of the bone. He leaned forward into the effort, his lips just barely glancing across the bony protuberance of his C-7 vertebrae before the tip of his nose brushed into his hair and the Omega took a deep, deliberate breath.

The rush of Will's hot exhale against his flesh sent a shiver spilling down Hannibal's spine as warm arousal pooled in his belly.

"Too hard?" Will murmured in response to Hannibal's reaction, and Hannibal could only give a short hum of denial and a twitch of his head in response.

He tried not to focus on the solid heat of Will's body encompassing his own, of the slight frame pressing ever tighter against his back as Will's movements grew lazy and languid, until he was more petting across Hannibal's frame and down his flanks - careful to avoid the thing they had yet to address, covered with a large piece of gauze on the right side of his ribcage; always careful to avoid that. He hooked his chin into the crook of Hannibal's neck and breathed a gentle sigh.

"He's not gonna touch you again," Will vowed, his voice a mere whisper against Hannibal's ear. "I know you got no reason to trust me, but trust *that*, alright, darlin'?"

Hannibal did.

Will could hear soft murmuring coming from the tables on the other side of the stacks. He recognized the gentle, stuttering cadence of Peter and preened internally - getting the Omega on library duty had been a proud moment for him.

When he rounded the corner he was shocked to find Hannibal petting a fluffy, brown rat the size of his broad palm, smiling at the excited Omega in front of him as he listened to Peter ramble off a list of reasons why rats were great companions.

"...and they remember faces! They g-g-get very attached. And they are actually v-very clean." Peter's stutter was always less pronounced when he was animatedly discussing animals, his brain not given time to stall his speech when he was so full of excited energy.

Will didn't want to press too hard on the possessive flare of jealousy that creeped in around his vision, streaking his eyes with spider-web cracks of gold. He wasn't sure when he'd started considering the Alpha as *his* but his Omega snapped its teeth and howled at the rival Omega sitting so close to Hannibal. And his own jealousy struck him at the soft, fond look Hannibal gave to Peter.

"Mornin', Peter," Will spoke quietly, making easily telegraphed movements into the Omega's line of sight. Peter was easily spooked and Will didn't want to upset him, no matter how covetous and grumpy he was feeling.

"H-hi, Will," Peter smiled his lopsided smile, averting his gaze to somewhere over Will's shoulder. He took the rat gently from Hannibal's hands and offered him up to Will for inspection. "I found him in m-m-my cell. Gotta hide him from t-the COs or else they'll kill 'im," the Omega sounded distraught at the prospect, and clutched the rat closer to himself.

"Why don't you go get some fresh air with your new friend, hm Peter?" Peter wasn't stupid, contrary to how most of the inmates and guards treated him. He'd been in an accident that had given him brain damage, but he was sharp as a whip and he knew when he was being dismissed, no matter how gently Will tried to phrase it.

"S-sure thing, Will. Kevin and me will g-go outside," he gave another small smile to both men before skirting around Will, the library door closing with a soft susurrus of sound behind him.

"You were good with him, Icarus. You got siblings?" Will knew immediately that he'd managed to stumble upon a sore spot, the man's eyes going shuttered and dark. "Ignore me, I got a big mouth, darlin'," the endearment fell from his lips like a promise, like it was natural.

The pleased scent it gained him only further confused Will. He'd heard of true mates, whispered fairytales shared at sleepovers, or glamorized stories used as fodder for television dramas and blockbuster films. But he'd never *met* another person who claimed a true mate. He wasn't even sure he believed in them.

But with Hannibal, a part of himself he'd thought dead and buried *wanted* them to be real.

The Alpha raised a slight brow, humor pulling his lips up into a toothy smile, his fangs protruding into his bottom lip. "Peter is easy company. I find I'm inclined to agree with your

assessment that he doesn't belong here. He isn't capable of the level of harm they claim he is," the man rose to his feet and meandered slowly towards the stacks, a few books in his hand that Will took notice of.

"Find any decent readin' material?" Will stepped closer to the Alpha, infiltrating his personal space under the guise of taking a closer look at the books.

Hannibal didn't complain, only twisted his hand to show the titles. "The prison library is painfully lacking, but needs must," he smiled again, turning between two of the tall metal shelves that stretched nearly floor to ceiling.

"Anything else lackin' for you, Doctor?" Will shot playfully, draping himself in a way he knew was alluring against the shelves, book spines digging into his shoulders.

Will's chest grew tight with the promise of a purr as the Alpha's eyes scanned the long line of him before quickly averting to the row of books in front of him. "I imagine there's not much to be done about the fare served here, or you would have done so already," Hannibal murmured wryly, and Will hummed in agreement. "A less psychotic cellmate would be appreciated."

Hannibal turned toward him then, the lack of space between them showcased as Hannibal's shoulder rested against the shelves right next to Will's. "Perhaps there's something to be done about *that.*"

"Oh, there's *plenty* to be done 'bout that. And rest assured, darlin', I'm on top of it." Will twisted his body to mirror Hannibal's, that purr catching in his throat again as he drew close enough to feel the heat radiating off the Alpha. He let his body sway even closer, close enough to brush against the arm tucked between them, still holding the reading material Hannibal had deemed worthy of his attention.

He gave a coy glance up and saw that Hannibal's gaze had darkened, held eye contact with the man as he watched his pupils flood dark and wide, amber eyes invaded with streaks of Alphan red. "There...anything else you need me on top of?"

He didn't actually give the Alpha time to reply, reaching around him to pluck a book at random from the shelf, not even looking at the title before he held it close to his chest and brushed his shoulder against Hannibal's, putting some distance between them immediately after.

He smirked, watching the still-healing Alpha's body pull towards him like an ocean tide to the shore, seemingly incapable of stopping the instinctive reaction to give chase to the Omega.

With a grin full of teeth, Will turned on his heel, the pleased spice of his scent and the Alpha's interest following him from the library.

Hannibal held the bundle of his belongings to his chest as he was guided into his new cell by correctional officer Brown. The entire layout of the prison was blueprinted in his memory palace, so he wasn't surprised when they turned into the open doorway and Will was draped across the bottom bunk like he owned the room, rather than resided in it against his will. But he was surprised by the grin that lit upWill's face when he saw him.

"Thanks for bringin' him, Matty. I'm mighty appreciative," the weight of his words, the clear promise of reciprocity, was obvious to Hannibal, even without the warning Will had given him all those weeks ago about showing appreciation or owing favors.

"Thank you, Officer Brown," Hannibal turned to the Alpha and nodded his head in appreciation before taking a step into the room, crossing the small space quickly and placing his things at the foot of the top bunk.

"I would have thought you had claimed the top," Hannibal smoothed out his jumpsuit and stepped back far enough to meet Will's eyes.

Will's grin turned flirty and dangerous around the edges as he appraised Hannibal. "Is that a euphemism, Doctor? How stereotypical an Omega do you think I am?"

Hannibal smiled, chuckling softly. "Not a euphemism. Just genuine curiosity."

"I like a little variety. Figured I'd try out the bottom for awhile." his eyes flash mischievously and his scent thickened. Brazen as he always was, so atypical for his gender. Hannibal gave a pleased hum in reply.

"Variety, as they say, is the spice of life," Hannibal nearly purred. He was sure his eyes flashed the bright red of a pleased Alpha.

"Southern boy, born'n'bred," Will's sly grin bared his fangs, sent another pleasant thrill through Hannibal. "I reckon they'da kicked me outta the Bayou way back when if I couldn't handle a bit'a spice."

Hannibal did purr then, unable to restrain his approval. Will was such a fascinating creature. A chameleon, constantly changing his shape to fit in the space required of him. But Hannibal could see the truth of his sharpest edges when they were alone in moments like this. His own monster howling its interest and acknowledgment from inside the darker recesses of his mind.

"I miss having a kitchen," Hannibal frowned slightly, all of the subtextual discussion drawing forth memories of standing in his own kitchen in Baltimore, ingredients perfectly organized along his countertop as he prepared meals.

"You a cook?" Will inquired, sitting up straighter on the mattress and patting the bed beside him in offering.

Hannibal folded himself into the tight space with tender movements - the stitches had been removed from his thighs a few days prior, but the wounds still ached when he stretched the skin too quickly. He had never been one prone to slouching, but he was very nearly forced to;

one more motion that sent a dull throb through the still healing brand on his back. He mirrored Will's position, carefully tucking one leg beneath him while he allowed the other to hang off the side. "No, I'm a psychiatrist."

Will nearly choked on his laughter, his eyes squinting closed in joy. "Oh, the good doctor has *jokes* too; I didn't know."

Hannibal smiled in reply before continuing. "I used to host dinner parties at my home," He paused, considering. "It will be summer soon. Always my favorite time of year to have friends for dinner."

He didn't startle when Will let their knuckles brush against each other in a move that was deceptively casual to be so clearly deliberate, intrigued at the Omega's boldness. "You'll be outta here soon enough and back to your fancy dinner parties and your three piece suits." Will teased, meeting Hannibal's eyes for a moment. He'd noticed the boy wasn't overly fond of eye contact, but he met Hannibal's eyes frequently. He wondered if it was easier because Will saw something familiar gazing back from them; that terrible darkness, that ever hungry monster that prowled just beneath the surface, waiting...

"How do you know I wore suits?" Hannibal teased, allowing another whisper soft touch of their fingertips as he spread his palm out wide on the bed between them.

"You didn't know?" Will asked in mock surprise, "My empathy doesn't just give insight to people's minds. I can read fashion sense too." His lips twisted into a bashful grin as he swayed to the side and jostled Hannibal's shoulder with his own playfully. "I read all about your trial. Article came with a *real* nice picture." He peered at Hannibal from the corner of his eye. "Full color and everything. And I got the sense it wasn't just court attire."

"A shrewd observation," Hannibal conceded.

Without warning, Will dipped over into Hannibal's space, stretching his body along the length of the bed and craning his head to peer out of their open cell door. Will's scent invaded Hannibal's senses, fogging his mind with pheromones and flooding his mouth with an excess of saliva. When Will pulled back, he did so only halfway, his neck stretched out temptingly close to Hannibal's mouth.

"It's about time for lunch. We should get going," the Omega murmured, twisting his head to catch Hannibal's gaze. Indecision flickered over his features as the younger man seemed to battle something within his own mind before he finally seemed to settle on a path and cast a concerned look at Hannibal. "Listen, I know we don't know each other much, but I've taken a bit of a shine to ya. I'm not gonna let him touch you again, so if he's out there you just ignore him and leave it to me, alright?"

Every Alphan instinct inside Hannibal screamed at him to protest, to show his strength by refusing protection offered by *anyone,* let alone an Omega half his age. Hannibal gazed at the young man next to him, took in his earnest expression and felt an unfamiliar warmth flood his chest. Perhaps it was not the worst thing in the world, he wagered, to feel protected. After all, the Omega beside him was far from his typical gender; he could be vicious, Hannibal knew, and cruel. His darkness prowling close enough to the surface that Hannibal could smell

it, could see it in the marbled glint of Will's eyes. He longed to see Will in his full glory, sinking his little fangs into an enemy and renting them to pieces.

Perhaps he would be afforded just such an opportunity in Mason.

Hannibal sat with Will and Randall and three other inmates that he didn't know by name, but who were known to hover within the sphere of Will's influence. And for the first time since Hannibal was imprisoned, he sat through a meal undisturbed, with no one daring to take food from his tray.

It was an off day for laundry detail so Hannibal had an open afternoon, which he spent in the common area teaching Randall the more delicate intricacies of the strategy of chess. Will spent a little time on the sidelines observing them, and even more time off to the side entrenched in low-toned conversations with various inmates.

Hannibal had spent the first game against Randall splitting his concentration between instructing the young Alpha and eavesdropping on Will's sideline chats. One stray glance to his left met Will's unimpressed gaze, enough to convince Hannibal to forfeit his attempt at multitasking and focus the brunt of his focus upon the game before him.

At one point, Will sidled up to the table where they sat, entrenched in their fourth game of the afternoon. He had to admit that Randall was improving, though Hannibal had found it necessary in their previous game to impart upon him the importance of a mere pawn by cornering his king with two of them and taking the game.

He felt Will's warmth encompass him as he hovered just behind, first settling a hand upon Hannibal's shoulder solidly and then sliding it inward until his fingers were wrapping gentle but confident around the nape of his neck even as he leaned over and moved Hannibal's bishop for him. It was, first and foremost, a gesture of dominance; a way for the Omega to announce to all in viewing distance that this Alpha was spoken for, off limits. Hannibal knew that. It also left him with a distinct sense of security and comfort.

He couldn't particularly say that he minded.

That evening, while preparing for bed, Will deliberately brushed against him once again, pressing bodily against the length of Hannibal's back as he passed by on his way to the bunks. Emboldened, Hannibal caught his wrist and urged the Omega closer, his other hand falling to the young man's waist as he tipped his head down, seeking a kiss.

Will's smaller hand slipped between them, its mere presence upon Hannibal's chest enough to stay him, though Will didn't apply any force behind the action.

Hannibal frowned down at him. "You want me," he declared, certain that he hadn't misread the situation, nor the unmistakable scent of the unbonded Omega's interest.

Will's mischievous smirk flashed his gleaming fangs as gold-laced blue eyes danced with amusement. "So?" was his only reply, the monosyllabic response both a tease and a

challenge, and then he was slipping out of Hannibal's grasp and climbing into his bunk, leaving Hannibal frozen in the middle of their cell.

Things continued on much in that way over the next several weeks; Will a flirtatious tease one moment before pulling away altogether the next. Hannibal didn't know if it was better or worse that he didn't seem to act this way with any other inmate. He spent his days entrenched in Will's sweet scent, nearly constantly half-hard between that and Will's light touches and coy smile.

He still received lingering stares from time to time, once or twice a gruff insult in his direction, but beyond that, nobody bothered him, though Mason had been openly glaring at Hannibal from across the courtyard for nearly an hour. It was recreational time and Hannibal had made his way outside to watch Will as he completed his daily sparring session with Randall.

The way Randall moved when they sparred was animalistic and wild, a blunt instrument that would prove brutal and deadly if pointed at a target, but without finesse. When Will moved, it was with a fluid grace that spoke to years of training, like a vicious yet no less beautiful dance. Hannibal wondered what had sparked the desire in him to learn mixed martial arts. Whether there was a catalyst that spurred him into action or whether his seemingly useless Alpha father had managed enough foresight to consider the security of his Omega son in the crime world.

"He looks awfully good like that don't he, Hanni?" Mason appeared in Hannibal's periphery and he clamped down on the desire to rip the rival Alpha's throat out with his teeth and claws. The unfortunate pig had been released from his stint in solitary just that morning, and it seemed that he was quite eager to take up his self-appointed mantle of resident nuisance once more. Hannibal's silence only seemed to encourage him.

"Bet he'd be nice and warm, soaking wet between those thighs, hm? That why you left me, doc? Wanted to get yourself up inside the little slut?" Mason's faux pout coupled with his obscene words caused a ripple of possessive anger to spark down Hannibal's spine and he dug his claws into his knees through the scratchy jumpsuit fabric to avoid reaching out to shred the other man to ribbons. He'd rather like to remove his tongue and see how well he managed to spit such vitriol without it. Will had told him not to engage Mason for any reason, so Hannibal took a steadying breath and remained silent and still.

Mason pat Hannibal on the shoulder as he walked past him. Will was now doing pullups on the pull-up bars that littered the middle of the yard, his legs dangling below him, arms straining under his own body weight. *Vulnerable.* As Mason approached Will, he bumped into him forcefully enough with his shoulder to knock Will from his grip, the Omega spilling out onto the asphalt below.

Even from several feet away Hannibal could smell the sudden copper tang of blood, thick and sweet with Will's natural scent. He could hear the air rush out of Will's lungs as it was knocked out of him, the Omega temporarily dazed from the fall. Mason took the opportunity to pounce, delivering several swift, sharp kicks to Will's exposed ribs before falling on top of him, scratching at his face and arms and landing several harsh punches in succession.

Several things happened in slow motion. Hannibal could see, too far across the yard to arrive in time, two of the guards pulling out batons as they ran. Randall was on Mason already, ripping at his arms and trying to displace him from Will.

And then Hannibal saw a glint of teeth, sharp and jarringly white in the late afternoon sun. Mason's teeth. The Alpha was going to try and forcefully bond with Will, Hannibal could sense it in the pit of his stomach. Something primal, feral came over him in that moment and he felt himself moving before he even realized he'd stood up.

He made it to Mason's side just as the Alpha sank his teeth into Will.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs!

'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

> “I hardly understand why *I’m* the one bein’ punished when you already admitted I didn’t do nothin’,” Will argued hotly.
>
> “I’m sick of this pissing contest between the two of you. One more confrontation, that’s what I’ll be doing. Then we’ll see how well you run this prison with only yourself for company.”
>
> Will blinked up at the bulky Alpha. “*You* run this prison, Jack,” Will reminded the man.

Chapter Notes

> We had intended on making you guys wait, but then we were threatened with legal action. And anyways, the anticipation was killing even us! Have another chapter. <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will woke up in solitary. He expected as much, his memory not so foggy that he couldn’t clearly recall Crawford’s booming voice shouting at the guards to get everyone into seg, uncaring as to who was involved.

He also remembered the sharp, piercing flash of pain that accompanied teeth sinking into his skin, Mason’s smell pungent and thick in the air, clogging up his lungs.

His hand slapped against his neck quickly enough to startle him, checking for a bond. His scent gland seemed undisturbed, no vicious ring of teeth marring the skin. But just a few inches below that delicate pocket of hormones that would have mated him to a monster such as Mason, a thick gauze rested against a wound he could still feel bleeding sluggishly.

As his fingers traced over the clear teeth indentations beneath the gauze, he remembered the scent of pure, Alphan rage and the fierce sanguine of Hannibal’s eyes as he’d thrown Mason from Will’s body like he weighed nothing. He’d smelled like winter frost and the summer Bayou, both comforting and incensing all at once. Deadly. Will had never seen the Alpha lose his composure in the months he’d been here, the man seemingly made of stone even as he’d been raped and beaten nearly daily.

But for Will. For Will he’d nearly gone *feral.*

He needed to see Hannibal. Make sure the COs hadn't hurt him too badly when they'd broken things up. Will tried to shift on the thin, lumpy cot and found an ache in his ribs that he hoped indicated bruising and not anything broken. He looked down at his bare chest and saw his abdomen wrapped in bandages, some bruising peeking out along the top.

He pushed himself to standing, hissing through gritted teeth as glass-sharp jolts vibrated through his core at the movement. He paused when he found his feet - unsteady though he was - and took one slow, deep breath. The pain was not replicated with the action, so Will figured the damage was minimal. It would be uncomfortable to move for awhile, he'd be vulnerable this way, but it wouldn't be the extended recovery of a break or fracture.

He shuffled over to the door, torso doubled over with one arm wrapped around his middle, and raised the other to bang against the door. "Hey!" he hollered, banged again. "CO!"

He kept banging until he heard movement in the hallway, though each impact with the door shook his body and sent another jolt of searing pain stabbing through his torso. He gave a sigh of relief when the small grate on the door was pulled back and revealed Matty's frowning face.

"Oh, good. Matty, I need to see Hannibal."

Matty's scowl deepened, resignation coloring the edges as he sighed. "C'mon, Will, you know I can't do that. Crawford would have my ass. Anyways, he's already been released from seg."

Not in seg or the infirmary, then; that was good. He hadn't even registered that the heavy feeling in his chest wasn't from his aching ribs, but a clawing panic that had been brewing since he woke. The weight lightened slightly upon hearing that Hannibal was seemingly okay, made it that much easier to breathe.

"Mason?"

"Seg. When Lecter hauled him off you he ended up kicking Jefferson in the head - man dropped like a sack of potatoes. So, safe to say that's where he'll be staying for the time being."

Will gave a grim nod. Served the vicious little fuck right. "Jefferson okay?"

"Mild concussion. They're putting him on mandatory sick leave for a week." Beside him, someone cleared their throat. Matty jerked in surprise and cast a guilty look to his right. "I was just -"

"I know what you were just," the Warden growled. "Let me in. Graham!" he barked at Will through the door, "Back away."

Will complied as quickly as he was able, moving to sit on the edge of the cot. He could feel a thin sheen of sweat breaking out across his forehead and lower back, his body reacting to the effort of keeping his actions small and slow. The door banged open a moment later, and Warden Crawford stomped in.

“You are lucky, Graham - goddamn *lucky* - that I have about a dozen witnesses - including two COs - swearing up and down you didn’t instigate this.”

The Warden was a big city man who’d managed to find himself in love and married to a small town woman, his New York accent sometimes slightly abrasive when he tried to wrap it around still uncomfortable turns of phrase, his vowels just a bit too clipped to make his attempt at a drawl sound honest.

“I don’t know what happened. The guy is a psychopath; he just snapped.” A hand returned to rub the gauze on his throat idly. “Little shit tried to *force bond me.*”

Crawford heaved a reluctant sigh, his hands on his hips. “Do I need to put you in protection?”

“Verger’s in solitary. *Again.*” Will pointed out. “He ain’t a threat.”

“For now,” Crawford agreed. “Maybe it’s inevitable. Maybe I should have listened to the Omega Rights activists and had you in protection from the beginning.”

Will snarled at the implication that he needed to be protected by anyone other than himself. He’d have done more than hold his own if Mason hadn’t started the whole thing with such a cheap shot - he’d have ripped the bastard to pieces.

“I hardly understand why *I’m* the one bein’ punished when you already admitted I didn’t do nothin’,” Will argued hotly.

“I’m sick of this pissing contest between the two of you. One more confrontation, that’s what I’ll be doing. Then we’ll see how well you run this prison with only yourself for company.”

Will blinked up at the bulky Alpha. “*You* run this prison, Jack,” Will reminded the man, too pure and sweet, like sugar water on his tongue.

The Warden didn’t growl - he had more control than that - but Will could see his lip twitch slightly in an aborted snarl. “Chilton tells me you’ve been skipping your court mandated therapy,” the Alpha pivoted so quickly it took a moment for Will’s hazy mind to catch up. “I don’t want to hear another report like that, either. You do your therapy, you do your work detail, you keep your goddamn nose clean and *stay away from Verger.* You do that, I’ll keep letting you pretend this show is yours.”

Crawford took a step to the right and jerked his head towards the door. “Get out.”

Hannibal’s body was sprawled gracefully along the bottom bunk where he could be closer to Will’s scent which lingered strongly in the sheets and lumpy, worn pillow, but his mind was deep inside the halls of his memory palace, in a new wing he’d erected specifically for his time here in Louisiana, in prison. With Will.

His hand was tucked underneath his prison-issue briefs, his jumpsuit draped neatly over the rail at the foot of the bed. He palmed his arousal, his cock fully hard while he was surrounded so thoroughly with Will’s scent.

In an exterior courtyard of his mind he was reliving the events of earlier, with a few alterations of his own making. In this version he was able to watch the fluid, graceful movement of Will's body in action as he moved with a quickness that was almost too fast for the eye to register. Will was on Mason, little Omegan fangs sinking into the vulnerable flesh at the front of his throat and ripping skin wide apart, blood pouring down his chest and painting Will's face in a fine mist.

Hannibal was sinking his own fangs into the lower left of Mason's neck as well, he and Will biting deeply enough that their teeth nearly met in his flesh. He crumpled to the ground in a heap, body already growing cold as death claimed him.

Will snarled at Hannibal and his teeth were gloriously stained, red and dripping in the low light of a full moon that hung above them. Hannibal took him to the ground and Will didn't fight him as Hannibal moved him into a mounting position, rending his clothes and tossing the tattered remains off to the side. He made quick work of his own clothes as well and then his body was jerking forward, his cock sliding into the warm, welcoming heat of his Omega.

Hannibal ached, deep in the pit of his stomach, for Will. He was warm, a thin layer of sweat covering his nearly fully nude body and his scent gland was swollen and sensitive to touch. He'd taken his mandated suppressant with the morning meal, but it seemed as though he was showing signs of pre-rut after the incident earlier with Will and Mason. He'd felt it, even then, the pure adrenaline that filled his muscles and compelled him forward to defend his mate from a rival. He'd acted without thought, his body moving on instinct.

He was close already, painfully so. He could feel his knot forming beneath his clenched fingertips, the head of his cock leaking copiously against them. He could still smell the blood, almost cloying in the back of his throat. Mason had attacked one of the correctional officers in the scuffle and had been summarily knocked out and then carried on a stretcher to the infirmary before his stay in solitary. Lost, for now, to Hannibal's wrath.

Hannibal growled as he squeezed over his knot, applying tight pressure as he imagined sinking into Will's body. He could almost taste the soft scent of the bayou at night, verbena and salt with a hint of freshly crushed herbs; it was a scent so familiar that he could easily associate it with his kitchen, with home, and it made his stomach twist and his knot throb, made his testicles ache for release.

He wondered how Will's slick would taste - likely as sweet as his scent. Hannibal groaned and worked his cock faster as he imagined lapping up slick as sweet and thick as molasses as it flowed from his mate.

He would fill Will to bursting with his release and then feed their combined flavors to him with worshipful fingers. He wanted to *consume* Will in his entirety. Sate himself fully on all the Omega could offer. He'd fill him in other ways too, good meals that would sit warm and heavy in their bellies as they stood victorious over their shared enemy. Hannibal would provide. He'd share this part of himself with his Omega.

Warm seed spilled all across his lower stomach as he brought himself to release thinking of his teeth in Will's neck, bonding them together. A lifetime flashed behind his tightly shut eyelids. A lifetime of hunts, of sex under blood-soaked moonlight, of nights spent sharing

meals they'd both helped bring to the table. He had never found another like Will Graham and he didn't imagine he would again.

And he wanted, oh, *he wanted.* He wanted to claim the young man for his own as he never had before, wanted to spend every moment of his day and night with another as he never previously thought possible. Will was for him, he *knew* it was so. The Omega had been crafted to rescue Hannibal from a soul-rending loneliness that he'd not even been aware of until the empty slot within him was suddenly filled up with the smell and feel of home, of warm Bayou nights and crisp, comfortable days spent by the fire in winter.

He tightened his hand around his knot, a pitiful whine slipping from his throat as another flood of semen burst forth. *Oh*. That was unexpected. There should be no secondary or tertiary release unless Hannibal was in rut or his mate was in heat. That occurrence only further supported his theory of being pushed into a rut, despite his suppressants. With that revelation came need, barrelling into him like a freight train, making him quiver and sweat and whine for an Omega that was not present.

He rolled over onto his side, taking no mind of the seed that slipped from his stomach and chest to stain the bedding beneath him, concerned only with burying his face into Will's pillow, chasing his scent. With his eyes closed, it was almost easy to pretend that the bed around him was warm from his mate's own body heat.

The walk from seg back to the main cell block was much longer and more arduous than Will recalled, mostly because he'd never before made the trek with multiple bruised ribs. He'd waved off Matty's offered assistance, though the CO was adamant about accompanying him back to his cell regardless.

With every aching step, he envisioned repaying Mason back three-fold, regardless of Crawford's threats. He was a lifer anyway, and the Warden didn't really have a leg to stand on keeping Will separated forever. He'd eventually have to let him back into gen pop, studies showing the inhumane treatment of Omegas included separating them permanently from others.

Something dark, and coiled deep in his chest, stirred awake at the thought of retribution. At the thought of blood in his teeth and Mason dead at his feet.

He tried to calm himself, he was already dripping with sweat, eyes damp with tears of pain and frustration that he absolutely *refused* to let fall. He managed the last hundred feet of his journey only by fantasizing about stretching out on his bunk and sleeping for the rest of the day as soon as he returned.

But when he turned to step into his cell, Will found that his bunk was quite decidedly occupied.

Hannibal laid there, curled up into a tight ball with hands and face buried deep into his pillow, a quivering, sweaty mess. It only took the span of one breath for Will to understand what was happening.

Spice and musk filled his nostrils, an underlying heat burning through and warming Will from the inside out.

Rut. Hannibal was going into rut. It was as unexpected as it was impossible, given the suppressants the Alpha was taking.

Hannibal's eyes snapped to Will as soon as he entered the cell, Alphan red and shining with need. An entreating whine slipped from his throat as he dropped his jaw to scent the air. Hannibal twisted and fought with the sheets wrapped around him, and Will could see as he scrambled to free himself and stand up that he had stripped down to his briefs; his cock was full and straining against the tight cotton barrier.

He could also see the evidence of Hannibal having found his pleasure at least once before Will arrived.

"Oh, darlin'," Will murmured with a sigh. "Poor thing. What's happened to you?"

Hannibal had much more confidence as soon as he was standing on two feet, seeming to remember even with his rut-fueled lizard brain that he was *tall* and *strong* and more than capable of overpowering the Omega in his sights. He strode forward with a low growl, caging Will against a wall before he even realized that he'd been backing away from the needy Alpha.

His hand darted up to fist tightly in Hannibal's sandy locks. "Hey," he tried, used his free hand to deliver a sharp slap to the Alpha when his eyes retained their hazy quality. "*Hey,*" he barked again, "Listen up. I'm gonna let you scent me, alright? But that's all you get. You can scent. If you try to bite me, I'll rip your fucking throat out."

A low purr of approval rumbled through Hannibal, indicating that he understood, at least a little bit, that Will was being willfully accommodating. But when he leaned forward, he swayed to the side of Will's throat with the gauze-covered rival bite, and his purr morphed to an angry growl.

"No, no," Will soothed, cupping Hannibal's face and directing him to the other side of his neck. "No, over here. There," he purred as Hannibal surged forward to press his nose against Will's scent gland, nuzzling against Will's cheek and neck to place his own scent against his skin in return.

The rest of Hannibal's body slotted against him, rutting lazily as he drew in greedy breaths of Omegan scent, and it took all Will's concentration to refrain from grinding against the Alpha in response, urging him even closer.

Will could feel himself reacting, and he forced it down, turning his head slightly to give Hannibal more space to work with, and also so that he could make eye contact with Matty who still stood in the doorway, dumbfounded.

"Keep this quiet, Matty. And find him some rut-staller. They'll toss him in seg if they know he's slippin'," Will purred softly as Hannibal licked up along his jawline, mouthed absently at Will's skin.

“The fuck is rut-staller gonna do? He’ll still rut eventually,” Matty asked, but he was already pulling himself together and turning to walk away by the time Will replied.

“You let me worry about that, Brown. I’ll take care of him.”

When the CO returned he found them curled tightly together in the bottom bunk, the thin, come-stained sheet pulled over them and Hannibal’s face still buried in Will’s neck as he seemingly slept.

Will met Matthew’s eyes over Hannibal’s prone body and opened the palm of his hand to accept the staller.

“They only had injections. We only have to keep these for emergencies ‘cause of regulation, but never actually had to use ‘em.” Matty crossed the space and placed the syringe in Will’s outstretched hand only to be greeted by a low, rumbling warning growl from Hannibal.

“Shush now, none of that darlin’. That’s just Matty here to help us, hm?” Will soothed the Alpha, uncapping the syringe with one hand and bringing it to the thin layer of fat that padded Hannibal’s flank. He was so fit, his body well toned and firm.

Will shook his mind clear long enough to find a good spot for the needle before plunging it in and depressing the plunger. The scent in the room began to shift almost immediately, no longer the thick, nearly choking scent of an Alpha dangerously close to rut.

He handed the syringe back to Matthew and made an impatient gesture towards the door, dismissing the CO. Matty left with only a low grumble.

“Come on sweetheart, let’s try to get you sitting up. Does that sound okay?” Will ran his fingers up and down the exposed flesh of Hannibal’s side, his fingers glancing across the puckered, still irritated scarring from Mason’s brand. An irrational flash of anger sparked at the back of Will’s mind, his fingers curling possessively around the still healing mark. He wanted to claw it off Hannibal’s body, wanted to replace it with his own.

He could see it, so clearly, in his imagination. How easy it would be to turn the V into a W. Signifying Will’s ownership. This man was *his.* His lips pulled back in a snarl of indignation on Hannibal’s behalf. He could feel himself on a dangerous precipice, so close to pre-heat.

He’d never had a heat. He’d been too young when he was first incarcerated and the suppressants ensured that his hormones stayed regulated and kept him from succumbing to biannual heats. But he knew the signs. The sweat along his upper lip, the warm slickness that leaked sluggishly between his thighs. He wasn’t in full blown heat, not yet, but pre-heat would be just as dangerous in a place like this.

“I never did see the appeal in terms of endearment,” Hannibal’s voice rumbled against Will’s neck, his breath warm and comforting even against Will’s feverish skin. Welcome, after the hours he’d gone without hearing its soothing cadence.

Will hummed in reply, quirking an eyebrow. Hannibal must have realized he wanted him to continue.

“I like it. When you do it, that is.” Hannibal spoke candidly, still slightly dazed from the rapid fire release and then suppression of his rut hormones, lips looser than they typically would be.

“Yeah? You like it when I call you sweet things, baby?” Will’s voice was teasing, but not mocking. He shifted slightly to actually move them to a sitting position, following up on his earlier promise even though all he wanted to do was burrow into the protective strength of the Alpha’s arms and let himself fall.

“I like when you give me any attention,” Hannibal sighed. Will’s chuckle morphed to a strained grunt as his ribs throbbed with the change in position and Hannibal stiffened, instantly turning hands and eyes upon him. “You’re hurt,” he growled, eyeing the bandages that wrapped Will’s torso where his jumpsuit hung open. He slipped his hand into the open space and pet gently over the bandages, snarling when Will winced. “I’ll kill that pig for hurting you,” he vowed, and then raised his free hand to brush a thumb over the bandage on Will’s neck as well. “For *daring* to mark you -”

Will shushed him, brushing his hand away and leaning over as much as he could to offer his scent to the grumbling Alpha. “Shh, now, don’t be gettin’ yourself all worked up again. I’m here. I’m fine.”

I’m yours. He was surprised to find the words on the tip of his tongue, bit them back at the last moment.

“Mason’ll get what’s comin’ to him,” Will assured him.

He closed his eyes and relaxed into the embrace as Hannibal gently adjusted them so that Will’s back was pressed to his chest. Arousal flared in his belly, more wetness appearing between his thighs, as Hannibal tucked his nose into the curls near his scent gland and fell into a pattern of deep, even breathing. The Alphan purr that rumbled through his back didn’t help matters.

“You’re nearing heat,” Hannibal pointed out in a murmur against his skin.

“Yeah,” he sighed. “I’m gonna hafta do something ‘bout that.”

Hannibal smelled so wonderful, his arms so comforting and protective. Will knew if he stayed there any longer he would lose the fight he was battling against his instincts and eventually just succumb to biology. He would go into heat, drawing Hannibal back into rut, and then all Hell would break loose. There was no shortage of Alphas with impulse control issues within these walls, and Will had no doubt that Hannibal would slaughter any number of them that dared try to challenge him.

“I can do something about it,” Hannibal rumbled suggestively in his ear.

Will wanted to whine and whimper and fall pliant to the Alpha's suggestions. He gave a soft chuckle and began to extricate himself from the cocoon Hannibal's limbs had formed around him. "Who says I want you to?" he shot back playfully.

Hannibal made a despondent sound as Will pulled away fully, clambering off the bunk to get some distance between them. The rut-staller must have been doing an effective job because Hannibal did not give chase after him, though it clearly pained him not to do so.

"I need to go; clear my head."

From the bunk, Hannibal frowned. "You're injured. You should lay down, and I'll go for awhile."

"Nah, I - it smells in here and - and I need to go to therapy anyways. I'll see you at supper, alright?"

And then, as quickly as his bruised ribs and battered pride would allow him, Will retreated.

He took the long way to the Infirmary Wing where Chilton's office sat, dipping outside first to breathe in some fresh air. Each Alpha that he passed eyed him curiously - Will was not in the habit of walking around the prison stinking of Alpha - and he knew that he should shower, but the thought of washing away Hannibal's scent sent a hollow pang through his chest. In any case, it would help to hide the scent of his pre-heat, and that smarmy shit Chilton wouldn't know the difference anyways, since Betas couldn't smell pheromones the way that Alphas and Omegas could.

He was unsurprised to see the sign on the door indicated that Chilton was not in session - inmates didn't much seek out the Beta's services unless they didn't have a say in the matter. He knocked and was bid to enter. He did so, flipping the sign over to display the 'occupied' side as he went.

"Will, what a pleasant surprise," Frederick Chilton's lips pulled into a grin that made Will itch to scratch it off his face. "Do you know, I was *just* speaking to Warden Crawford about you."

Will plastered an expression of stoic indifference onto his face and slowly sank into the chair across from Chilton's desk. "What a coincidence," he murmured in response. He mirrored Chilton's pose, right down to the slight tilt of his head, and studied the man to better gauge how to tell him what he wanted to hear to get this over with quicker.

"I heard you had a little trouble this afternoon," his eyes fell to the gauze that covered Mason's bite, and Will had the absurd urge to hide it from view. "I never thought it was a very good idea to have mixed genders in one prison. What's to stop an Alpha from claiming an Omega if the notion strikes him?"

"Control, mostly," Will chewed at the edge of his thumb to stop his mouth from twisting into a snarl. "This isn't the Middle Ages anymore. Even without the use of suppressants, Alphas

don't just go around fucking and biting whomever they please." Will huffed out an annoyed breath. "Usually," he added. "But Mason's hardly the poster child for the normal standard."

As he usually did when someone said something that contradicted him, Chilton ignored Will's answer. "Some might argue that Mason Verger was performing to exactly the normal expectation, catering to his baser instincts," the man paused, smug, "It must rankle, to know that there was an inmate with the gall to attack you outright. To know that, by the end of the day, everyone else in this prison will know that as well."

Will twitched his shoulder in an aborted shrug. "Word will spread, surely. But there were plenty of people present that will point out that I wasn't given the chance to fight back, people that know what would have happened if I had. And anyways, no one's crazier than Mason Verger. No one else would dare."

Chilton gave a small hum that sounded suspiciously like a snort. "That remains to be seen." He leaned back in his chair, swivelling lazily from side to side. "I wonder how this incident will affect your social standing here. If others will act now that they have seen that your name and reputation are little more than abstract constructs, rather than a sphere of protection. Graham or not, you can be injured just like any other man. You can bleed. Now that everyone knows that, it will be interesting to see if another attempts to oust you from your self-imposed role as king of the castle. No more strutting around this prison as if you own the place."

His eyes narrowed at Chilton's thinly veiled threats. He dropped his hand to his lap and sat up straighter, ignoring the insistent throb in his torso as he did. "Confidence begets confidence, and all that," he replied with a lazy wave of his hand. "I didn't come stomping in here declaring that I was in charge. The inmates decided that on their own, if what you say is true."

His head tilted again, beady eyes staring greedily over Will as though he could burrow into his mind by sheer desire alone. "As an Omega, is it important to you that the Alphas here view you as the one that's in control?"

Will snorted at the ham-fisted question. Clumsy as ever, attempting to plant the seed of a pathology within him by blatantly stating it aloud. "As a Beta, is it impossible for you to reduce an individual's behavior to anything other than their secondary gender?" Will bit back coolly. "Pretty lazy psychiatry," he drawled, "And ill-advised, attempting to delve mentally into subject matter that you could never hope to understand."

Delight replaced the simmering annoyance within Will as Chilton's mouth drew into a taut line.

"I wonder, sometimes, how Betas must feel in our society. Do they lament their lack of evolution? Do they see the way that Alphas are stronger, faster; the way that male Omegas have evolved to further their bloodline with the ability to both sire and conceive their progeny? Do they feel lesser, when they see a pair of bonded mates connected to each other with a depth far greater than they'll ever know? Do they walk into a room and wonder as to what they can't smell? Are they ever curious what rage or despair or arousal smell like?"

Will shrugged, allowed his mouth to twist into a small smile at Chilton's slack-jawed expression. "Probably they think that *we're* the lesser evolved ones. Driven by primal instincts and scents and biological urges that, to be fair, often cause more hindrance than help in our lives. Well," Will sighed and pushed himself to standing, gave another small shrug. "I suppose I'll never know what it's like to be a Beta - I can only speculate. Because I'd never have the gall to ask one to their face."

He sauntered over to the door, leaving Chilton to stew silently in the wake of Will's verbal backlash. "This was nice," Will tossed over his shoulder as he opened the door. "Not sure why I kept putting it off. Same time next week?"

He didn't wait for a response, closing the door softly behind him, sure to flip the sign around to indicate that any inmate was welcome to stop by.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs!

'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

> “I s’pose I’ve been mistreatin’ you somethin’ fierce, haven’t I?” he gave a soft little sigh, shifted forward ever so slightly so that their chests brushed together with each breath. “And you’ve been so very patient.”
>
> “All good things to those who wait,” Hannibal breathed, gazing down at the younger man. His fingers itched to slide through his riotous curls, stroke across his soft skin. “I am confident that I will be more than pleased with the final outcome.”

Chapter Notes

> This is the final chapter in what we are unofficially considering "Act 1 of 2" in this story. We wanted to thank you guys for the continued support. (And for not pursuing legal action against us after Thursday!) Things will be ramping up now and it's a wild ride to the end! We're honored you have taken it with us, and can't wait to share the rest of the story with you!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal’s muscles ached from exertion. He’d been forcing himself to expend the restless energy that thrummed beneath his skin and caused hair trigger aggressive reactions to even the most benign of looks from fellow inmates, especially looks that were directed at Will.

The Omega had experienced only minor backlash for Mason’s antics, and only then from some of Mason’s crew who felt emboldened by their leader’s attempts to control and ultimately remove Will Graham. A mating mark bonded an Alpha and Omega together, but an unreciprocated bond would create an imbalance in the power dynamics. Mason would have had insight into Will’s emotions, would have developed an Alpha voice from consuming the hormones laced in the blood of the Omega. He could have used that voice to control Will without mercy. And without a mating mark of his own against Mason’s scent gland, Will would have been nearly powerless to do anything about it.

Hannibal snarled at an inmate that passed too closely to where he and Will sat at the dinner table before realizing it was only Randall, and settled himself back into his seat. He didn’t miss the meaningful look exchanged between Will and the other Alpha as Randall sat on the opposite side of the table, directly across from Will.

Hannibal had barely been able to put distance between himself and the Omega without some level of distress prickling at the back of his mind. It was an uncomfortable and disquieting feeling; the sensation of intimate entanglement with another. Especially after so many years of relative solitude and autonomy.

He came back into the conversation like one does while breaking the surface of the water after a dive, slightly disoriented but also relieved to be removed from the depths of his thoughts.

“-be here in three days.” Randall was speaking in an earnest whisper as Will nodded in response.

“He’s quick, that one. Shouldn’t be surprised I ‘spose.” he cleared his throat and stretched out his body in a languid extension of his form, arms rising towards the ceiling before coming back down to rest on his thighs.

Ever so carefully and slowly, the Omega moved his hand, hidden from view beneath the table, and allowed just the tip of his pinky finger to caress against the side of Hannibal’s thigh. His entire body drew taut at the sensation, and he fought down the purr that threatened to claw its way past his lips.

“Tell the rest of the boys what’s up and we’ll prepare for the eventual blowback as much as we can.” Will confirmed, waving the hand not touching Hannibal in a lazy gesture of dismissal aimed at the Alpha across from them.

Randall didn’t hesitate, moving away from their table and settling at a different one several tables over to speak to the inmates there. Hannibal couldn’t help but feel that he’d missed something integral while he was lost in his thoughts, but Will’s skin, even through a layer of fabric that separated them, kept him from caring overly much.

“Let’s go get ready for lights out, darlin’.” Will taunted, a smirk playing across his lips as he gave a final pat to Hannibal’s leg and moved to stand.

Hannibal followed. Where else would he go?

Will could smell Hannibal’s pheromones flooding the air like ozone after a lightning strike, a cocktail of slow simmering anger that continued to spill over from the events of days prior with Mason, as well as the build up of sexual tension between them.

Will hadn’t been kind to Hannibal. He’d taunted him, teased him mercilessly at night when they were settling in for sleep. He’d started small, just getting himself wet enough to be easily scented by the Alpha above him. He didn’t allow himself to think of Hannibal, kept his imaginings as generic as possible to avoid further temptation.

He’d taken back his bed after the first night when he’d allowed Hannibal to remain sleeping nestled amongst Will’s sheets and pillow. The Alpha had been asleep, a makeshift nest around him, when Will returned from therapy and had remained asleep through the entire

night and well into the morning, his body exhausted from the hormonal gymnastics it had been put through as an unexpected rut had begun and then immediately been artificially stalled.

After those first few days, Will had upped his antics. He'd fingered himself, loudly, the sounds of his slick wet and lewd in the enclosed space of their cell. He could hear the Alpha breathing him in deeply on several sharp inhales, could almost imagine his claws as they dug into the sheets and rent them at the seams.

He hadn't let himself come that night either, holding himself and seemingly also Hannibal back from the brink. It was then that he realized the Alpha would let him get away with much, much more.

He behaved so beautifully for Will, responding to his every desire, sometimes without Will even needing to vocalize them. He never touched Will, never touched himself either as far as Will could tell. And, while Will wouldn't say Hannibal was *content* to allow himself to be edged forever, it seemed as though he were at least accepting of the fact that it was happening.

"Fuck," Will let out a soft whimper of need as his fingertips just barely brushed against his prostate, his inner thighs coated and glistening with slick. He could hear Hannibal shift on the cot above him, the coils groaning at the movement.

Will bit down on his lip hard enough to turn it white, trying to hold back his sounds. He rocked his hips down faster, slipping a third finger in beside the two already squeezed tight inside of him. He wanted to be stretched out around Hannibal's thick, Alphan cock. Wanted to feel himself spread wide to accommodate his knot. He tried to shut off that trail of thought before it could pull him in too deeply. It wouldn't do for him to push himself any closer to heat; his daily mandatory suppressants were barely keeping it at bay as it was.

He hooked his fingers viciously inside himself, trying to mimic what he imagined it would be like to have a knot filling him up, though he had nothing to compare it to. "Alpha, knot me, please," he whined, slamming his hips down and coming with a whimpering groan, his seed splashing across his exposed lower abdomen, finally letting himself find release after days of teasing. He knew the Alpha would be able to smell his scent thick in the air, and he couldn't stop the grin that spread across his face in his post-orgasm bliss.

His smile only grew wider as he heard the soft, barely vocal whimper from the bunk above.

"Everything alright up there, darlin'?" Will asked, still fighting to catch his breath in the aftermath of his release. He could smell Hannibal's arousal with every panting inhale - could imagine him achingly hard and alone in his bunk, struggling not to touch himself as he listened to the Omega below himself getting off.

A moment of thick silence, another small creak as the Alpha shifted and then, quietly, "Yes, Will."

"Good boy," Will purred. "Get some sleep, sweetheart."

Will didn't know if the directive was followed or not. He fell into a peaceful slumber not long after.

When Hannibal walked into the laundry room, he hadn't expected to see his Omega burning bright with rage in the center of the room, a stack of laundry spilled out across the floor. A quick perusal of the area uncovered the reason for his ire.

Peter was tucked in the corner, stuffed as far back as his slim body could be between two dryers that lined the sides of the large, open space. The Omega stank of fear, the scent sharp like flint and sulfur. A low, keening, Omegan cry was coming from his throat as he rocked himself, arms wrapped around his body in a self-soothing gesture. Hannibal considered going to him, but another look at Will had him thinking better of it.

"Why *the fuck* is he even in here, Zeller?" If it weren't for the clear control Will was trying to exhibit in an attempt to keep his tone low and calm so as not to further startle the already desperate Omega in the corner, Hannibal knew that the correctional officer would be in far greater danger of his sweet boy's teeth and claws.

Hannibal spared only a moment to imagine it, the three of them bathed in blood and Will standing triumphant and beautiful above the man. He was snapped from his thoughts when he caught movement from the corner of his eye, Price slowly slinking along the back wall to come between Zeller and Will.

"You don't own this goddamn prison, inmate! I was followin' my fuckin' *orders*. Straight from the Warden." Zeller was seething, his fingers clenched tight in his fists.

Price took that opportunity to finally slide into full view, placing a soothing hand on Zeller that wasn't immediately slapped away. "Why don't we take Peter back to his room to calm down, and I'll go have a chat with the Warden about more permanent staffing changes, hm?" the Beta was clearly placating both angry, snarling men, and Hannibal was impressed with his skill.

He saw as Will's shoulders immediately dropped, not fully lax but at the very least calmer than he had been moments before. He watched as his Omega took several deep, calming breaths, an action that must have caused him to scent Hannibal on the air as the boy turned immediately, eyes finding Hannibal nearly without effort.

"You do that. Thanks, Price," Will practically dismissed the two officers, walking instead in slow, telegraphed steps towards Peter. "Hey, darlin'. I know everything is loud and a bit much right now, but this nice man is going to take you back to your bunk so you can get some rest," Hannibal saw him lean closer and, even with his hearing, he was barely able to hear the whispered *and you can see Kevin*.

Seeing his mate being so gentle and kind after having been so viscerally angry only seconds prior caused a shot of pride and arousal to burst through Hannibal. Will Graham was a great and terrible sight to behold. As elegant and deadly as he was fierce and gentle.

“I’d like to be alone while I fold laundry today,” Will tacked on to the room at large, helping a shaking Peter up to his feet without looking at any of the people gathered around them. Eyes only on his task and helping the terrified Omega.

Hannibal knew a dismissal when he heard one, and he wandered into the other section of the laundry facility to focus on washing and leave Will to himself.

Hannibal had waited out cold. He’d waited out the hollow ache of starvation, had survived countless abusers, both recently in Mason and in his far away youth. He loved to see Will’s darker urges come to the surface, but he was beginning to wonder if he could wait out his cruelty as he always had.

Will gifted him with a different sort of abuse than he’d ever encountered, than he’d ever expected from the boy; keeping Hannibal on the edge of agony and elation. It was thrilling to let the Omega take the lead. To draw it out. Every glance from Will, every simple touch, every breath of his sweet, musky arousal laid down layer after layer of aching anticipation, building the foundation for something that Hannibal knew would be worth the wait in the end.

So, after his advances had been rebuffed the first time he attempted to kiss Will, Hannibal resigned himself to playing the role of prey rather than predator. And he waited.

When Will had told him that he wished to fold laundry alone and that Hannibal should make himself useful in the main room, Hannibal hadn’t been happy about it, but he’d obeyed. He wasn’t certain he was being all that useful, however, as his attention was drawn to the door that he knew led to Will every few minutes.

So, when the opportunity arose to go retrieve some chemicals from the storage closet, Hannibal jumped at the chance. He respected Will’s solitude and didn’t attempt to speak to the Omega - it was enough just to take a breath of his scent, now somehow more potent than the chemicals around them - but his eyes remained focused on the young man where he could catch glimpses of him through the open supply closet door, taking in every line of him, the entire journey across the room. Corrections officer Brown was stationed at the door that day, and he stepped aside wordlessly to allow Hannibal to pass.

He walked past Will and took a moment standing before the shelves to compose himself, to quiet the aching need that howled all the louder as soon as his Omega was in sight. He might have been alarmed at the sound of the door swinging shut behind him - typically it would be kept open so the officer on duty could monitor inmates with the chemicals - but Will’s scent wrapped around him just a moment before his arms did and a warm shiver spilled down his spine.

Will’s arms hooked around his waist, his chin coming to rest on his shoulder. “Whatcha lookin’ for baby?”

Will’s warm breath fell over Hannibal’s neck, his voice a low, silky purr that immediately set desire coiling hot in Hannibal’s belly.

“You,” Hannibal murmured truthfully, always compelled to honesty with the boy.

Will gave a soft hum, set his nose to Hannibal’s scent gland. He took a deep breath in and released it with a groan, pressing his body flush to Hannibal’s back. “I can smell your rut,” Will’s lips just barely brushed Hannibal’s neck as he spoke. “Sitting just beneath the surface, waitin’ to break free for me.”

“My rut and your heat have that in common,” Hannibal purred, eliciting a chuckle from Will.

“Turn around,” Will commanded, and Hannibal complied immediately.

The lighting was low in the closet, but Hannibal could still see Will’s eyes glinting mischievously as he pressed forward and caged Hannibal in against one of the shelves. Hannibal placed his hands on the shelf at his side and gripped its edge to keep from reaching forward. Will had no such reservations, slipping a hand between their bodies deftly and palming at Hannibal’s groin, unrepentant and without shame.

Will’s grin flashed his fangs as he found Hannibal already half-hard. He purred and pressed forward, nuzzling into Hannibal’s neck as his hand started a lazy rhythm on his cock.

After weeks of barely there teasing caresses and filthy, whispered words in the tight quarters of their room, the brazen, unadulterated touch of Will’s hand on his aching cock caused Hannibal to shudder, his entire body going tense and then totally lax as his arousal pooled low in his gut and arced like an electric current across his skin.

“Such a good Alpha, already so hard for me, sweetheart,” Will’s breath was heated against Hannibal’s neck, even with the slow burning fever of his rut simmering just beneath the surface. He didn’t try to suppress the shiver that overtook him when Will brushed his sharp, Omegan fangs against the exposed arch of Hannibal’s throat. He let his fingers curl tightly enough to press indentations into the skin as he clutched at the shelves.

Will’s laughter vibrated against Hannibal’s scent gland and he closed his eyes to the onslaught of sensations. The scent of Will’s pre-heat was cloying, like honey, but also sharply spiced like fresh thyme from his home garden. He parted his lips to collect it along the roof of his mouth, not even attempting subtly.

“Wanna feel your knot, darlin’. Gonna touch you a little. Just for a minute,” Will purred sweetly, pressing harder against Hannibal’s arousal and burying his nose in the heated space between Hannibal’s shoulder and neck, giving little teasing kitten licks to the entire area as he moved his hand in slow, firm strokes. Marking Hannibal with his scent.

Hannibal hadn’t felt so close to orgasm from so little since adolescence. The young Omega was driving him nearly feral with need and he could feel his knot pulsing against Will’s palm as he squeezed it tightly.

A sharp knock on the door shattered through the moment, pulling Hannibal firmly back into the present but having no effect on Will or his teasing strokes. He kept up the motions for a few more long seconds before finally patting Hannibal once more directly over his straining cock and the growing wet patch developing on the fabric of his jumpsuit.

“Good boy.”

Will stepped back, and a splinter of weakness split along Hannibal’s iron-clad self-control, like the beginning fissures of cracking ice. Hannibal stepped after him immediately. “Will,” he breathed; he could hear the desperation in his own voice.

As could Will. A cruel smirk flashed across his face before the Omega’s expression pulled into a small pout. He closed the distance between them, raised a hand to stroke tenderly along Hannibal’s cheek. It was the same one that had been on his groin moments before, and Hannibal could smell his own arousal, already fading too quickly for his Alpha to be sated, onWill’s skin.

“I s’pose I’ve been mistreatin’ you somethin’ fierce, haven’t I?” he gave a soft little sigh, shifted forward ever so slightly so that their chests brushed together with each breath. “And you’ve been so very patient.”

“All good things to those who wait,” Hannibal breathed, gazing down at the younger man. His fingers itched to slide through his riotous curls, stroke across his soft skin. “I am confident that I will be more than pleased with the final outcome.”

Will gave a soft purr of approval to Hannibal’s response, ignored the second round of knocking rumbling through the door. He tilted his face up, brought his lips a breath away from Hannibal’s own. “Tonight, I think, a little reward. Would you like that, baby?”

Hannibal didn’t trust himself to speak, certain that the only way he could move his lips in that moment would be to mold them against the Omega’s. He swallowed and gave a short nod.

“Me too,” Will breathed. He took another step back, an eyebrow cocked with interest as he waited to see if Hannibal would give chase again. He smiled when Hannibal remained where he was. “Time to get back to work.” He cast a pointed glance to Hannibal’s groin. “I’ll have Matty give ya one more minute to find that thing you were after,” Will suggested with a wink, and then turned and sauntered out.

Will’s fingers felt like flames where they sank into him, Hannibal’s entire body arched to entice him closer, deeper.

The Omega was knelt on the mattress between Hannibal’s spread thighs, both of them with sweat clinging to their skin, still too close to heat and rut to really be risking this, but it seemed even Will had reached his limit for teasing. He was still dressed in his jumpsuit, though he’d instructed Hannibal to strip out of his own as soon as the lights had dimmed for lights out.

Hannibal had been helpless to disobey, removing his clothing and letting them fall to the ground as the Omega had crowded him against the bed frame. They’d tumbled onto the bottom cot, and that was where they currently remained, one of Will’s hands grasping at Hannibal’s sweat slicked thigh hard enough to leave half-moon marks with his nails, fingers curled like claws against Hannibal’s skin.

Even more overwhelming was the clinging scent of Will's arousal, his thighs wet with slick as well as his fingers. The Omega had gotten himself wet, burying a hand into his unzipped jumpsuit and fingering himself for long, torturous minutes, while he made Hannibal sit and watch without participating. But eventually, he'd pulled his fingers impatiently from himself and, with his clean hand, had pushed Hannibal flat to the bed and settled between his thighs, petting over Hannibal's rim with slick drenched fingertips.

Hannibal had let out a low whining moan of need, his legs falling open reflexively to accommodate the smaller Omega between them.

"So slick for me, baby. So nice and warm up inside," Will purred, leaning his body close and angling his fingers so that they teased against Hannibal's prostate with each inward thrust. Hannibal was clinging to the sweat stained sheets, his nails shredding the thin material.

"One day I'll get inside you with my cock too, fill you up just how you need," Will's voice was sinfully sweet and coaxing, and Hannibal showed his teeth as his Alpha beat against the cage of his obedience. Some would consider what they were doing already to be taboo, an Alpha allowing themselves to be penetrated, but Hannibal didn't find the idea of Will's cock buried in place of his fingers abhorrent. He found that it was far more appealing than he would have imagined.

"Will, please," Will shushed him before he could continue with his plea, for what, he wasn't even sure himself. He'd stopped asking to come three refusals ago, determined to give Will whatever it was he sought between Hannibal's thighs.

"Good boy, that's it. So perfect for me, darlin'. I just wanna take you apart and put you back together again. Fuck you're so pretty like this." Will nipped playfully at Hannibal's chin before drawing his tongue down Hannibal's throat in a wet trail.

Hannibal's knot throbbed painfully between them, his cock practically ignored and forgotten. Will's whispered command that *Hannibal come from his fingers only or not at all* still echoed like static at the forefront of his mind.

He tried to push himself down against the intrusion but Will's fingers dug into his thigh and held him down flat against the bed, providing him little leverage. "Stay still, Hannibal. I'd hate to have to punish you on our first night together." The words were spoken as a promise rather than a threat and Hannibal found himself reacting to the easy, fluid control the Omega so effortlessly possessed.

The discordance between the concept of a man as young and seemingly inexperienced as Will Graham and the dominant Omega that stood before him was dizzying. Hannibal had never met a man - Omega or otherwise - like Will. He was a singularity. An inevitability. A force that, once entrapped by, one couldn't escape.

Hannibal bit his lip against the cry that attempted to claw its way out of his throat as Will pressed his fingers deep and rubbed insistently against his prostate.

Will grunted a quiet sound of dismay. "C'mon now baby, let me hear you," Will purred. "Tell me what you want."

“Your lips,” Hannibal gasped, hips automatically arching into Will’s ministrations before he regained control and went rigid with stillness. “I want to kiss you. Let me kiss you, Will, please -” Hannibal babbled, twisting his head from side to side to expel the energy within him that threatened to move his hands - he wanted to touch Will’s curls, his face, neck; wanted to strip Will from his own jumpsuit and pet down his flanks, circle his cock and plunge his fingers into Will’s wet heat.

The Omega above him made a small sound that might have been surprise; he was quick to push down the reaction and come back with a reply that was as confident and controlled as ever. “Kiss me or come, baby. You can’t have both.”

Will likely underestimated Hannibal’s desire to taste him. The very second he was granted as much permission as Will’s ultimatum gave him, his claws were shooting up lightning fast to claim his prize. He wrapped one hand around Will’s shoulder, the other molding around his neck and skull, both hauling the slim Omega down towards him so quickly that the younger man had no hope to stop him.

The first contact between them was harsh and bruising with need, Hannibal holding Will against his mouth for as long as he could manage, unsure if this opportunity was a last as well as a first. The moment they broke apart, Will took a shuddering breath and pressed forward once more.

Will’s lips were just as soft and plush as Hannibal had imagined they would be. He sucked his lower lip into his mouth briefly before he found it invaded by Will’s insistent tongue. He moaned around it, fought to retain some level of coherent thought to work at making this a good kiss rather than devolve to a sloppy, panting mess under Will’s attention. Emboldened, he captured Will’s tongue and sucked on it, drinking down Will’s own moan and rolling his hips into the fingers Will still had buried inside him.

Desire coiled tighter and hotter in his gut with each passing moment, his knot aching for pressure and his cock dribbling steadily. “Will,” Hannibal gasped between one joining of their mouths and another. Hannibal forced himself to pull away. “I’m going to - you, you need to stop,” Hannibal panted, panic a real thing scratching within him as his pleasure mounted higher and higher.

He *couldn’t* come, because he had chosen the kiss. Will needed to stop, or Hannibal was going to come. He tried to impart this pertinent information to the Omega between the kisses that he showered upon Hannibal, but Will wasn’t *listening,* and Hannibal was getting closer and closer…

“*Will,*” Hannibal groaned pitifully. “Will, I’m -”

“Come for me, darlin’,” Will breathed against Hannibal’s lips before closing the distance once more for another quick kiss. “Do it. I wanna see you get those wings all filthy, my Icarus, wanna taste you. Do it now.”

Hannibal snarled his relief into Will’s relentless lips, allowing himself to become lost to sensation as he came all over his lower abdomen, seed spilling out milky white and thick from the unceasing stimulation to his prostate.

It nearly hurt to come this way, untouched other than the slim fingers that hooked so wickedly inside of him, persistent in their seeking pressure, rolling waves of pleasure crashing over Hannibal at the continued stimulation. Will wasn't stopping and Hannibal couldn't find the desire to try to make him.

"Beautiful, Hannibal. You're so good for me, baby. I'm so fuckin' proud, but I think you can come for me again, can't you? Melt a little bit more for me, hm?" and Hannibal *wanted.* He desperately wanted to come for Will again, do whatever the young Omega asked of him.

"Yes, Will, please, yes," Hannibal had never felt so lost to pleasure. There was a vast difference between sexual arousal and sexual release. He'd found release countless times, with innumerable partners. But he'd never felt arousal with any of those nameless, faceless lovers. They'd never even been close to the level of arousal he'd felt with Will over the last weeks, just from the simplest look or softest touch.

Hannibal whimpered in delirious need, bucking his hips and sobbing his frustrations. He'd never before wanted to be *good* for someone. But he needed to be good for Will, felt compelled to complete this task Will had given him.

"What do you need, my good boy? What can I do to help you?" Will shifted above Hannibal, and his scent grew thicker in the air at the movement. Hannibal growled as he breathed him in, dragging his scent along his soft palate and snarling.

Will was surprised again by Hannibal's request. He'd expected him to beg Will to touch his cock, his knot. But instead he got a gasping request so soft that he didn't hear him the first time.

"What was that, darlin'?"

"I want to taste you, Will. Let me please you." Will caught Hannibal's eye and saw the need in them, the obvious lust and honesty. Hannibal didn't want anything *from* Will. He only wanted to experience him and give him pleasure.

He made a decision. He still wouldn't let himself come, wouldn't let Hannibal touch him, he couldn't risk the possibility that it would send him reeling into full blown heat. But he'd give the pliant, willing Alpha a taste.

"Alright, baby. Let's see what we can do about that," he chuckled, pulling his fingers from Hannibal, the motion accompanied by a cry of distress from the man beneath him. "Shush now, none of that. I'll be right back up inside you in just a minute, sweet thing," Will swatted at Hannibal's thigh playfully before moving up his body, making sure to hover his body just far enough to be a whisper of a promise of flesh against flesh without actually touching.

Suddenly, the Omega was turning himself around to face the foot of the bed, his back to Hannibal. And Hannibal realized what was happening, what Will was offering him.

"Keep your hands on the bed, Hannibal. You can't touch, but you can have a taste," Will purred, scooting back so that his body was draped over Hannibal's and his wet thighs and flushed pink rim were right over Hannibal's face. "Just a little bit, darlin'."

Without preamble, Will dropped his hips and Hannibal was powerless to stop his tongue from coming out to meet him, licking desperately over his slick-soaked rim. Will was aroused enough that his hole was pliant and easily began to part for Hannibal's tongue as he tried to spear it inside.

Will made an unhappy sound and lifted his hips up. "No, Hannibal. You aren't allowed inside me, yet. You just get to lick me clean," he looked over his shoulder at Hannibal to make sure the Alpha understood. Hannibal nodded his head shakily at the command and let his lips fall open as Will started to drop down again. "You made such a mess, baby, least you can do is clean it up, hm?"

Hannibal had been blessed enough to experience all manner of decadence throughout the years - from the finest truffles and wine in Italy and France to the uniquely euphoric experience of consuming an ortolan bunting.

Nothing compared to the intoxicating nectar that was *Will.*

Hannibal lapped away the mess across Will's thighs before bringing his tongue to stroke along his hole once more. He moaned when he was rewarded with fresh slick straight from the source, again when Will whimpered and pressed his hips down more insistently. Already, he could feel his spent cock twitching with interest, beginning to fill.

And then Will's hand wrapped around him, and moments later the delicious, wet warmth of Will's mouth encircled his head. Will suckled softly, chasing the taste of Hannibal's seed with an appreciative purr, and then cruelly released him seconds later and seemed content not to continue. Hannibal groaned and bucked his hips up desperately; Will gave a soft *tsk* and dug his claws into Hannibal's hips. Will's own cock leaked arousal onto Hannibal's chest as he worshiped the Omega with his mouth, the heat and scent of Will surrounding and invading Hannibal so thoroughly he felt dizzy with it.

He whined when Will finally pulled away, dug his claws into the sheets at his side to quell the urge to strike out and overpower the fleeing Omega. But then Will had turned once more, and leaned again over Hannibal, dipping down to run his tongue broad and flat over Hannibal's chin and lips.

"Mmm, taste good sweetheart?" Will purred against his mouth, and Hannibal whined again.

He was certain he had never whined a day in his life - not for *anything.* He couldn't seem to stop whining for Will.

"Still gonna make you come again," Will declared as his fingers sank back into Hannibal, the glide velvet smooth with Will's own slick. He ducked his head down to nuzzle against Hannibal's throat, lips parted and hot breath puffing over Hannibal's sweat-slick skin.

Hannibal turned his head away in a silent indication for Will to continue, giving the Omega more access and shuddering when his tongue darted out to swipe over Hannibal's scent gland.

“That’s right baby,” Will breathed against the shell of Hannibal’s ear, “Bare your neck for me. Such a good Alpha.” Will curled the fingers within him, ruthlessly stimulating his prostate; Hannibal’s hips jerked in response to the overstimulation, already so sensitive from his first orgasm. “I could sink my fangs into you right now and you’d just accept it, wouldn’t you? So eager to please your Omega, to be claimed by me…”

“*Yes,*” Hannibal gasped in answer, his head tipping back in offering as the pointed tips of Will’s fangs were dragged lazily down the column of his throat.

“Yeah?” Will let out a soft, amused huff at his eagerness, but Hannibal couldn’t find it within himself to feel ashamed.

Will broke him down, tore him apart, like no other could. Like no other *would dare*. What’s more, Hannibal *wanted* to fall to pieces in the Omega’s arms. He trusted Will to put him back together.

“You want my mark, darlin’? Wanna walk through these halls makin’ sure *everyone* knows who you belong to?”

“Yes, yes, Will, *please* -” Hannibal’s cock throbbed with need, his knot full and aching to sink into the tight hole of his Omega. His entire body trembled as arousal began to coil tighter and tighter in his gut for the second time. His eyes stung, and when he squeezed them closed he was surprised to feel wetness in his eyelashes, trailing down his temples.

“That’s right, come on now,” Will urged, no doubt well aware that Hannibal was balancing on the precipice of a second orgasm. “There’s my good Alpha, my mate. Fall for me, baby.”

Hannibal cried out and spasmed around Will’s fingers, come dribbling warm and sluggish between them once again at the term *mate*, nearly sobbing with relief at Will’s acknowledgement of their connection. Will continued to work him through his release until the last of his seed had been milked from him and then finally pulled his fingers free.

Hannibal melted bonelessly into the bunk beneath him, the hard, substandard frame somehow the most comfortable he had ever laid upon. Will’s tongue swiped slow and soft across Hannibal’s cheek, following the trail of his tears. Then, he slid down the mattress and began to lazily lap up the release that stained his stomach. When he was finished, he dragged a finger through the drops of his own precome that had dotted Hannibal’s chest as he ate Will out, smearing the clear fluid around without ever really wiping it away.

He stretched out on his side next to Hannibal, head propped up by a hand and hummed with delight at the distraught, dishevelled mess he had made of the Alpha. “Don’t shower tomorrow.” Will commanded softly.

Hannibal had just enough energy to nod in agreement before sleep took him.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

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'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

> "Friend or foe?" Will didn't have to look up to know Francis had seen Hannibal watching.
>
> Will gave another soft chuckle. "Friend, I think," he fought the impulse to let his eyes drag back in the direction of the Alpha. "Maybe more," he added softly.
>
> "Oh?" was Francis' grunted reply. Will could feel his cheeks heating. "Never thought I'd see the day my fierce, independent little Omega would show neck for an *Alpha*."

Chapter Notes

> Once again, a great big thank you to all of you fantastic readers for showing up, leaving your kudos/comments and just being amazing in general! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will could hear the echoing *tap tap tap* of expensive heels coming down the corridor before the door to the room even swung open to reveal one Margot Verger. Dressed as impeccably as always, her long hair trailed loose and wavy down her right shoulder today.

“Ms. Verger, how are ya on this fine day?” Will inquired, nodding his head at her in greeting. Zeller was accompanying him today, and clearly Price still hadn’t quite gotten through to him yet on how things worked, because Will was cuffed to the table and also to the floor by shackles. He hadn’t protested the treatment, though he made a mental note to have one of his boys start watching the CO more closely. It would be ideal for Zeller to fall in line on his own, but Will wasn’t above holding the knowledge he gained about someone over their heads to make his life easier; he just had to hope that Zeller would be caught doing something less than above board. From the way the Alpha’s eyes glossed over when Price was around, Will was pretty sure he wouldn’t be catching the CO fraternizing with any inmates.

“Mr. Graham.” She settled into her seat across from him, uneasiness telegraphed in her every movement.

“I’m sure you’re wonderin’ why I’ve asked you back here after our last conversation.” Will steepled his hands in front of him on the table, dragging the cuffs across the metal with a clang.

“The thought had occurred to me. Our last conversation felt quite final.” She agreed easily, smoothing her hands down her dress. She still smelled like riding leathers and faintly of horse stables, Will noted with a quiet sniff.

“Well, ma’am, the thing is that I’ve given some thought to what you were offerin’ and I think we can help each other out after all.”

She arched a perfectly manicured brow in question, gesturing for him to continue.

“I’m sure you’ve heard your charming brother tried to bond me in the yard a bit ago. Landed himself straight in seg that way, but I’m afraid an animal such as him might require a longer term solution. And I’ve grown so terribly bored with reading the same three books over and over and beating everyone at chess.” Will chuckled darkly, sure that his meaning was clear.

Margot’s eyes grew wide in understanding and a flicker of something akin to hope lit inside them. She cleared her throat before replying.

“I agree. On all fronts, Mr. Graham.”

“If you plan on representin’ me, I figure we should be on first name basis, dont’cha think?” Will smiled wide enough to show his teeth. Margot was a survivor, like him. She didn’t flinch from the display, simply mirrored it with a grin of her own.

“I think that sounds just fine, Will.”

Francis Dolarhyde had been formidable enough when he’d had the threat of prison only hanging over his head. He had become wretchedly terrifying now that he was on the inside. He was a lifer, Will’s daddy finding Francis the best lawyer money could buy when he’d first been charged with murder.

Each time he committed a new crime in prison, his lawyer worked tirelessly to ensure that he kept getting life sentences, parole a distant, no longer attainable concept in the rearview for the Dragon. But at least Will’s daddy’s money was good for something. It had kept Francis alive, which Will appreciated immensely, and also extremely useful.

“Will,” Francis spoke, inclining his head formally in greeting. Technically, Will was his boss and Francis was just old school enough to show him the respect afforded to him from that title. However begrudging Will was to it.

“Francis, it’s good to see you.” Will greeted the man warmly with a hug, tucking his nose into the familiar, though heavily suppressed scent. Francis had looked after Will most of his life, had been a constant shadow up until he’d finally been caught a few years prior.

The man rumbled his greeting into Will’s hair and pulled back quickly, never overly fond of prolonged contact, even with Will.

“Been in seg for two weeks. Apparently I’m a hazard,” the man grinned, a rarity for him, Francis always had been self conscious about his smile.

“A great, scary dragon,” Will nodded in agreement, chuckling as he led them on a walk around the yard, happy to be stretching his legs. He could see Hannibal sitting on a bench not far away, eyes trained on Will’s every movement.

Hannibal wasn’t the only one hyper-aware of their surroundings. “Friend or foe?” Will didn’t have to look up to know Francis had seen Hannibal watching.

Will gave another soft chuckle. “Friend, I think,” he fought the impulse to let his eyes drag back in the direction of the Alpha. “Maybe more,” he added softly. This was Francis, after all. Francis, who had been Will’s protector, mentor, friend. He and Bev were the two people on this earth he knew he could trust without question.

“Oh?” was Francis’ grunted reply. Will could feel his cheeks heating. “Never thought I’d see the day my fierce, independent little Omega would show neck for an *Alpha*.”

Will gave a snort and swayed to the side, bumping his lean shoulder against Francis’ own thicker one. “Who says I’m the one showing neck?”

Francis returned the jostle, his larger frame knocking into Will with more force despite obvious restraint. Movement in the corner of his eye drew Will’s gaze back to that bench; Hannibal wasn’t advancing, but he had risen from his seat and stood glaring at Francis, hands clenched into fists at his sides. Will stared at him until he drew Hannibal’s eye and then gave a sharp shake of his head. Hannibal watched him for a moment, eyes flicking to the Alpha at his side with contempt and then back to Will, entreating. Finally, he returned to his seat.

A low, rumbling grunt sounded beside him. “Ah. Yeah. You *do* have him by the knot, don’t you?”

Will snickered, the heat in his cheeks flooding deeper into his body, pooling low in his gut as he thought back to his time with the needy Alpha a few nights prior. All at once, he was surrounded with the phantom scent of Hannibal’s slow-burning rut, spice and musk and heat; could taste the bitter fluid of his release on his tongue. A shiver of need spilled down Will’s spine, made his insides clench, and he frantically turned his focus to taking a few deep breaths of fresh air.

He was going to need to tread with caution - he was far too close to slipping into heat. The temptation to let it happen, to allow that marvellous, magnetic Alpha to mount and tie him was so strong. But they had more pressing matters to concentrate on at the moment.

“Can I meet him?”

The question threw Will, pulled him back into the present moment. “Of course,” he murmured.

Rather than change their direction to encounter him, Will beckoned Hannibal to them, stamping down on the pleased purr that threatened to bubble up in his chest when the Alpha immediately complied, as though he’d simply been waiting for the invitation. Hannibal strode toward them, tall and regal, every movement an elegant display, surrounded by the air of

nonchalance that Will had seen the Alpha armored with for so many weeks before he had known him - before they had known each other.

He was respectful upon approach, stopping before Will with no tension visible in his frame. He appeared, at first glance, completely neutral, if not just a bit curious. Will was certain that he wouldn't have been able to see the hostile jealousy burning through Hannibal if it hadn't been for his own unique ability, as well as his own personal knowledge of the Alpha.

"Francis, this is Doctor Hannibal Lecter," he introduced, gesturing to each party in question.

"A pleasure," Hannibal lied.

Francis gave a silent nod in response.

"Francis has been a friend of my family since I was just a pup," Will told Hannibal. "Taught me everything I know. Everything important anyway," he amended.

"Boy could hardly make a fist before he met me," Francis rumbled in his low, gravelly voice. "Always thought of the fierce little thing as the pup I never had."

The underlying message to Hannibal was clear: *I am not a threat.*

"He is like none I have ever encountered," Hannibal agreed, tone noticeably warmer.

Will let out a breath he wasn't aware he'd been holding, relieved that the air between the two Alphas was amicable enough, even if still a bit strained.

"We should discuss the target," Francis murmured, returning his attention to Will.

Will nodded and resumed his stroll, pleased when both Alphas fell into step at either side of him. The thrill of having two such powerful entities subject to the whims of his desires was intoxicating. He was certainly familiar with strangers that knew his family name pledging their allegiance to his cause and person, but it was different with these two; both of them so obviously and wholeheartedly loyal to *Will*. Both of them dangerous predators in their own right.

"Mason Verger has crossed the final line. I can't afford to have him working against me after what he's done."

"He attempted to force a bond on Will," Hannibal spat, providing context and an excuse to crowd closer to Will's side.

A growl of displeasure rumbled through Francis' broad chest. "I know all about Verger. I'd have been happy to dispose of him before. Knowing now that he has offended my blood, I'll even take pleasure in it."

Will settled a soothing hand on the Alpha's shoulder. "I'm pleased you're on board. But here's what I have in mind…"

Hannibal had always been an autonomous, lone creature. Alone but not lonely, he'd never allowed himself to rely on another. That is, until he met Will Graham.

The Omega carried himself with an easy grace and air of respect that was generally unheard of for a boy so young. If this was the respect he garnered so tactfully and without force, from dangerous inmates nonetheless, Hannibal could only envision how cunning, how ruthlessly unstoppable he would be as he aged and grew more comfortable with the monster that lurked beneath his skin, more familiar with cultivating his more vicious nature.

His interest in Will, which had begun as an almost professional curiosity, had now taken on a life of its own, and Hannibal found himself often caught in the midst of dizzying emotions that he had no familiarity with, nor had he ever had any interest in. He wanted a *mate.* Wanted it to be Will. He craved the Omega when he wasn't near, and he was constantly incensed when he was.

Which is how, at three in the afternoon, and in full view of anyone who cared to watch, Hannibal found himself boxed in against a wall while Will palmed his crotch in an obvious and possessive display.

He'd been speaking with Francis and Randall, most likely still planning for Mason's release back into the general population later that week, when he'd caught Hannibal's gaze and left his conversation to approach him. He'd taken a proprietary sniff of the Alpha's scent before leaning in close to place his hand over Hannibal's erection. Hannibal had been so caught up in the near constantly simmering arousal while viewing his Omega in action, that he hadn't even realized he was hard and putting off pheromones that, even with the suppressants, probably clearly advertised his state.

Will leaned in impossibly closer, and Hannibal was only just able to maintain a modicum of decorum and dignity by holding back a whimper as Will's hand squeezed tighter. "How 'bout you go back to our room, sweetheart, and I'll meet you there in just a minute, hm?" It was framed as a question but Hannibal knew that he was being commanded.

He went willingly.

Minutes stretched by like hours until he heard the soft susurrus of Will's feet on the concrete floor right inside of their door. The doors could not be controlled by inmates, which meant their cell would remain open to the hall outside for whatever Will had planned.

Hannibal experienced a full body shiver at the thought of being on display. Wanton in his need for his Omega.

"They all know you belong to me. You're mine, Icarus. You hear me?" Will nearly purred his pleasure against Hannibal's neck as he pinned him to the wall adjacent to the open door and licked over his scent gland, pulling in Hannibal's increasingly aroused pheromones onto the roof of his mouth and committing them to memory.

"Yes, Will." He replied, unnecessarily, as he pressed his palms flat against the crumbling brick of the wall at his back, digging his nails in enough that some of the plaster fell away.

“Your rut is comin’. I don’t think even stallers will help this time, baby,” Will rumbled into Hannibal’s throat, his sharp Omegan fangs brushing dangerously close to where he could one day leave a mating mark.

“You smell like thick honey. Like molasses and crushed sage,” Hannibal replied shakily, more plaster coming away in his hands as he fought not to touch Will.

“You scentin’ me, darlin’? Innit that rude? Thought you hated the rude?” the implication was clear. Hannibal knew that Will had been gathering research on Hannibal’s past, as well as the murder that had landed him in prison. With empathy as complex as the Omega seemed to possess, Hannibal wouldn’t be at all surprised if he had seen the true monster beneath the facade.

“Discourtesy is unspeakably ugly to me,” Hannibal agreed breathlessly. “One could argue that your own actions have been less than polite,” he pointed out.

Will gave a thoughtful hum as he shifted to slot their groins together and gave his hips a roll. “That so? What sort of punishment would befall me for such rudeness?” Will murmured in his ear before hooking his lobe with sharp teeth and giving a teasing tug. “Supposin’ we had met on the outside?”

Will ceased his sensual assault upon Hannibal’s neck, tipping his head back so that their gazes could meet. Will’s eyes were as beautiful as ever; sharp, crystalline blue laced with molten gold, somehow both bright with mirthful amusement and shadowed with dark desire, entreating Hannibal’s monster to come out and play.

“Nothing as clean as tearing out your throat,” Hannibal promised him. He risked admonishment by moving his hand, bringing it up to push away the curls that had fallen into the Omega’s eyes and then letting his fingers sink into the soft tresses, petting idly. “I would break you apart, reassemble you into something even more beautiful in death, transcendent. But first I would take a piece of you. Something to keep with me always.”

Will’s brow quirked, his lips twisting into a smirk. “A trophy?” he teased.

Emboldened, foolish in all the ways that he found Will made him, Hannibal dipped his head to bring their lips closer. “An entree,” he corrected softly.

He watched Will’s eyes as the Omega spun the words around, saw the way his pupils dilated as the pieces of the puzzle that were Hannibal Lecter slotted together in his mind and revealed the full picture. Will’s breathing quickened, his pulse rabbiting in his veins - Hannibal might have thought it fear, if it hadn’t been for the arousal-laden pheromones that thickened around them.

“What a vicious Alpha you are,” Will breathed against his lips; it felt like praise, made Hannibal purr. “Some dark and primal beast, hidden away ‘neath the person suit that everyone else sees.”

“Everyone but you,” Hannibal corrected again.

Will pressed forward to crash their lips together, licked into Hannibal's mouth and moaned when his tongue swept over Hannibal's sharp fangs. His hands were on Hannibal's then, forcing the Alpha to relinquish his hold on Will and returning them to their rightful place against the wall.

The slide of the zipper on Hannibal's jumpsuit was loud in the otherwise silent room, sure to draw the attention of anyone passing near their cell. Hannibal's lungs seized as Will dropped to his knees with a fluid grace, fishing Hannibal's thick, leaking cock out of his briefs and flashing him a devilish grin.

"If you try to knot my mouth, I'll bite it off," Will warned with a wink, and then he promptly devoured Hannibal in his own way.

Margot's visit was unexpected, though not altogether surprising. Matty hadn't been thrilled with the state that he'd found Will and Hannibal in, though he'd been courteous enough to wait in the hallway for another few minutes while they collected themselves. Hannibal's taste was still on his tongue, the irritating dampness of fresh slick still wet between his cheeks when Will entered the private room where she waited.

"Apologies for makin' ya wait, ma'am," Will offered earnestly as the door swung shut behind him. "I was, ah, otherwise occupied when Matty came for me."

He couldn't stop his shit-eating grin when Margot's nostrils flared and her eyes flashed with understanding. It wasn't very gentlemanly, waltzing into an enclosed space reeking of arousal and his lover's release, and at another time, Will might have felt ashamed for the way that Margot's cheeks pinkened at the revelation. But, Will supposed that plotting to murder someone's relative in exchange for help manipulating the justice system into releasing an inmate that fully deserved their punishment crossed all sorts of lines that made other things pale in comparison.

"How *is* Hannibal?" Margot inquired, recovering quickly.

Will sank into the chair across from the lawyer and slouched down, making himself comfortable. "Grinnin' like a possum 'bout now, I reckon."

Margot pushed a file folder across the table toward him, flipped it open and summarized the documents within, pointing out specifics with the pen in her hand. "Standard agreement of representation - you'll notice that the work is listed as a pro bono effort under the section on costs and fees," she flipped to the next page, "Confidentiality agreement, as well as release of all records to me that I feel may pertain to your case, legal or otherwise - that includes any records kept by your psychiatrist from your court-mandated therapy sessions. This last one is the motion to appeal your sentence of life without parole and request a modified sentence. We're shooting for time served, though given the way Louisiana frowns upon murder, I'd be just as happy to get it down to two or three years."

Will nodded, running his tongue over his teeth. "We might hit a bit of a snag with therapy records," Will sighed, sitting back in his seat and chewing at the side of his thumb.

“Chilton’ll hand ‘em over no problem, but they ain’t likely to be real flattering.”

Margot gave him a small smile and set the pen down atop the documents. “You don’t need to worry about that. I plan to take a more sympathetic approach. Your mental health and your psychiatrist's opinion on the matter won’t be called into question.”

“Puttin’ alotta trust in you, Margot,” Will informed her, even as he picked up the pen and began to scribble his name and the date on each indicated line. “‘Spose I don’t gotta tell you what happens if this goes belly up. I’m a real this-for-that kinda guy. I won’t take kindly to someone bartering for services rendered and then leavin’ me high and dry.”

Margot, to her credit, took Will’s thinly veiled threat in stride, not even blinking an eye. “Rest assured that your confidence has not been misplaced,” she spoke soft and even, her hazel eyes wide in earnest. “I will get you out of here, Will.”

Good Lord take him, Will believed her.

Dinner in prison left much to be desired. Hannibal’s only true complaint about the time he would spend in the care of the Louisiana State Penitentiary system was the quality of the food. Nothing homemade, everything pre-packaged and prepared for mass consumption.

Today, though, Hannibal paid little attention to the food, too focused on the slim Omega who seemed to hold everyone around him in sway. Will’s foot brushed his underneath the table when he caught him looking, a quick smile on his lips before he turned to pay attention to whatever it was Randall was saying to him.

Hannibal still smelled thickly of the two of them, Will making him come earlier and demanding he leave his soiled clothes on for the rest of the day. *Again.* The Omega had also rubbed his slick all over Hannibal’s teeth, his tongue, his chin. Painting him with his scent. Everyone in the building knew that Hannibal was wholly Will’s.

“Well, well. If this isn’t just the *sweetest* thing I’ve seen in weeks. The loved up couple, a king and his queen sitting high and mighty on their throne. Only - which one of you is the queen? My first guess would have been the Omega but - aha, well, we all know how well Hanni here can take a knot.”

Mason Verger stood before them, looking a bit thinner around the edges but no less insane after several weeks in solitary. Hannibal only just held back the snarl that threatened to rip itself from his throat, all eyes trained on the small group. It would be foolish to react to such an obvious taunt.

Francis moved to stand, and Will looked up at him with a sharp shake of his head. *Not yet*.

Without a word, Will stood and the entire table followed him. “Seems like a nice time to let off some steam before lights out, huh boys?” Will prompted, walking his small entourage towards the exit to the recreational area.

The man chuckled madly after all of their retreating backs. “Was it something I said?”

“Alpha,” Will whimpered into his pillow, body arched in a perfect mating pose with two of his fingers plugging him up. He rutted down against the sheets, his cock wet at the tip and smearing across the thin fabric beneath him.

“Why won’t you let me touch you, Will? I could make you feel so much better if only you’d let me,” Hannibal reasoned from his place on the bottom bunk.

Will chuckled weakly on a whining moan. He wasn’t full enough. Wasn’t getting enough friction where he needed it. It had been weeks of this, of teasing touches and of getting Hannibal off after edging them both. Will was scared to fall into his heat, though he’d never told anyone else why that was.

He felt like he could share with Hannibal. “My daddy -“ he paused, pulling his fingers free and crawling down to join Hannibal on the bottom bunk. He didn’t bother to get dressed. They’d seen each other plenty already. Deeper than just skin.

“My daddy threatened to have me bred and married on my heat. I presented later than most and he was horribly disappointed. He never wanted a *breeder* for an heir. But I guess he thought he could breed me and get an Alpha outta me. If at first you don’t succeed and all that.” He sighed, the words falling heavy and foreign from his tongue, and ran his still wet fingers through his hair, not minding the way it caused his curls to slick back.

“He, uh, he slipped up and told me he’d killed my mama on the same day he threatened to have me married off for breedin’. That’s when I ripped his fucking throat out.” The Omega snarled, showing a vicious flash of teeth.

They sat in silence for a few long moments, Hannibal unable to stop himself from reaching out to caress Will’s cheek. It was something Will loved about Hannibal. The Alpha was so content simply to exist around Will. To touch him with no expectations.

He didn’t allow himself to overly examine the word love or the warm feeling it shot through his belly.

“So you never experienced your first heat. You were arrested and immediately placed on suppressants. You’re understandingly concerned about the loss of control, Will. After what you’ve been through, it’s a reasonable worry,” Will couldn’t help it, he shot forward and captured the Alpha’s lips with his own, a groan of surprise the only reaction as he climbed into Hannibal’s lap.

“I’m ‘fraid of what’ll happen if you touch me how I want you to,” he whispered into Hannibal’s lips, hiding the confession between their breaths. “I wanna feel you inside. Stuffing me full. I wanna let you breed me. Claim me. Damn the consequences.” He whimpered, rocking his hips down with more force as he felt Hannibal growing hard between them.

“I could never hurt you, Will. Would never do anything you didn’t ask for,” he smeared the promise against Will’s lips with another claiming kiss, wrapping a hand around the back of Will’s neck in a typical Omegan soothing gesture. “I know you are perfectly capable of protecting yourself. I only want you to understand that you don’t have to.”

The whine that spilled forth from Will was purely Omegan, his need apparent as his cock throbbed against the thin fabric of Hannibal’s jumpsuit. They rocked together, just like that, and the friction, combined with the intensely foreign feeling of being *known* and *safe*, was finally enough to have Will spilling across Hannibal’s lap, his scent thick in the air.

He palmed at Hannibal’s crotch with a needy grasp until the Alpha joined him in his pleasure, the scent of their combined release melding into something that smelled like spruce wood smoke and the Bayou at night, like fresh herbs and wet, fertile soil.

Like home.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

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'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

> “I’ve been reading strategies about chess,” Randall told him. “About drawing out the knights to leave the king unprotected.”
>
> Will gave a hum, his gaze sweeping around the large room. “I’d like to see your strategy today. I’ve got one of my own, teasing the king out with irresistible bait. We’ll see if it works.”

Chapter Notes

> Okay, with any luck the plan is daily updates until we take a holiday hiatus from December 23 - January 5th. And then we'll return after the New Year with the epilogue! We hope you enjoy the onslaught of new chapters in the coming days!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For the first time since they began sharing a cell, Will and Hannibal slept squeezed against each other, crammed onto the overly small bunk that certainly wasn’t designed with companions in mind. They ended up with Hannibal on his back, Will tucked under his arm with half of the mass of his body sprawled across Hannibal’s broad frame.

Hannibal couldn’t say he minded, the unfamiliar weight invoking nothing but comfort. He had shared his bed with those that he had been intimate with in the past - previously, a king-sized mattress afforded plenty of space to retreat into solitude after finding release, even if his bedfellow accepted his courteous offer of remaining for the night.

But this - laying on a thin, lumpy mattress atop a rigid, unforgiving metal frame with nary enough room to shiver, lest he fall off the edge, crowded by an Omega that he hadn’t even yet been entirely intimate with…

Hannibal would give his world, just for this.

He didn’t sleep, so much as retreat into his memory palace to add to his ever-growing wing immortalizing the wondrous creature in his arms. He breathed Will in and stroked tender fingers through his curls and imagined every day ending just like this.

He could be happy that way, he decided. Wherever they were.

Will had made it very clear to Francis that whatever discordance that erupted between he and Mason must *not* be founded in any manner reactionary to Mason tormenting Will. It wouldn't do much good for the Alpha to take the fall for Mason's death if anyone with a brain could connect it back to Will tugging at the Dragon's strings.

Francis had almost done so the moment that Mason reappeared in gen pop, though luckily the man was disciplined enough to follow Will's guidance and resisted taking the bait that Mason so obviously dangled before him. Their entire plan might have been undone in that one moment; Will was proud of the Alpha for abstaining from his instincts to tear apart any entity that threatened or insulted his family.

As luck would have it, Mason Verger was such a colossal shit that it only took the span of a week for him to insult Francis on a level personal enough to justify declaring bad blood between the two of them.

Mason had found him in the yard, where he was working through his daily routine - a combination of strength training and yoga so beautifully mesmerizing to behold that he and Hannibal had merely sat on the sidelines observing the Alpha. His corded muscles contracted and shuddered at the strain of raising the considerable heft of his body up with only one arm. His jumpsuit had been stripped halfway off and tied around his waist to reveal a substantial portion of the tattoo that covered the back side of his body: a great and terrible dragon in blacks and reds, spanning the width of his shoulders and length of his back and, Will knew, curving down his glutes and thighs to end with a tail wrapped around one ankle.

Hannibal had recognized the art as Blake's Great Red Dragon - because of course he had - and from that moment on seemed less prickly of Will's own eyes glued to the Alpha, as he himself sat entranced.

They didn't hear whatever snide remark Mason drawled to Francis as he circled the space that Francis dominated, but, given that it spurred a reaction from the Alpha, Will trusted that it was singularly aimed at Francis. He and Hannibal watched as the Alpha slowly bent his straightened body until he was twisted into a right angle, and then suddenly dropped his other hand to the ground for leverage to strike both bare feet out into Mason's chest, sending him sprawling to the ground five feet away.

"Magnificent," Hannibal murmured, captivated, and Will hummed his agreement.

Francis was back on two feet, standing upright before Mason even had the wherewithal to tell which direction was up. He stalked toward the nuisance with purpose, muttering something in his low, gravelly voice as he advanced upon and then circled the blond. Will didn't need to know what Francis was saying - he knew from years of experience that the Alpha was a man of few words; if he decided that something was worth stringing together more than half a dozen words at a time over, it was a speech meant to inspire either awe or fear.

Usually both, if Will was honest with himself.

It all happened quickly after that. Two of Mason's goons took sucker shots at Francis, bringing him down to the ground. Randall, always with a hair-trigger rage that meant he got into a lot of fights, was immediately drawn into the fray. Even though, as it turned out, Dolarhyde hadn't needed the help.

Will saw Mason take a chunk out of Randall's shoulder, sinking his fangs in and ripping flesh away. Before the guards could make it to the scuffle, one of Mason's men had bitten deep into the same open wound in Randall's shoulder, obscuring the bite enough that it wouldn't be traceable to Mason.

Mason had remained a *victim* during the entire assault, taking a few hits and making sure to look generally pitiful as he was carried back to the infirmary.

He was in seg for less than forty-eight hours before he was back in gen pop and, a few days after that, Francis returned as well.

Will was too far away, still in line waiting for his breakfast, when he heard the second fight break out. This one was over far quicker but was no less bloody; one of Mason's men was missing an ear before Brown and Zeller managed to get between everybody and break things up.

Will decided it was time to act.

"I dunno, Will. I'm willin' to do a lot for you, man, but if I go 'round murderin' people then I belong in here with all the rest of ya." Matthew looked hesitant, wary. It wasn't that Will didn't understand; he knew what he was asking.

"I'm not askin' you to kill him. I just need five minutes of security feed loop and the bathroom to be empty. I'll handle the rest."

The CO shook his head, the *no* already perched and ready to fall from his lips.

"He's a rabid dog, Matty. Ain't nobody but me can put him down." Will hated to do this, but he needed the man's help. "He already took a piece outta Randall. What'll it take from him next to get you to act?"

The Alpha showed his teeth in a snarl at the reminder of Randall's attack. The other Alpha was still recovering from the two bites he'd received.

"Five minutes, Graham. I'll keep the showers clear for five minutes and I'll loop the feed. But that's all you're gettin' from me and then we're even, got it? No more hangin' Randall over my head like bait."

"Five minutes is all I'll need." Will replied, his smirk growing fangs as he clapped the man on the shoulder.

It had been five months since Will had first met Hannibal; thirty-seven days since he'd started sleeping curled around the Alpha on the too-tight prison cot every night.

Which is why Will woke up startled and disoriented to an empty bed and felt only further confusion when he reached into the hollow space left cold by Hannibal's absence.

He took a few calming breaths, and that's when he smelled him. The Alpha was falling into rut again, his scent choking and thick in the air. Will climbed into the other bunk and found the man curled pitifully around Will's old pillow, nose pressed tight to the scratchy fabric.

"Oh, baby. We need to get you some more stallers." Will sighed, petting through Hannibal's sweat-drenched hair, hair so wet that his usual sandy blond had turned dark with the weight of it.

"I'm afraid stallers will not stop this now. It's the prolonged proximity and intimacy. My Alpha won't be sated again by artificial hormones or chemical stallers." Hannibal sounded so glum, and Will could understand the sentiment. He knew the Alpha feared the loss of control that came along with his rut, especially within these walls. He shared many of the same concerns about his own heat. But perhaps Hannibal was right. It was time for action.

"Today. It happens today." Will knew he was understood when the Alpha turned to look him in the eyes.

"As you wish, Will." His smile showed too many teeth and it caused something in Will's belly to burn and his heart to beat painfully against his ribs. He would have this man; in every way imaginable and a few not yet thought of. His Omega purred in contentment as he pondered the concept of ownership and how it was a two-way street.

When the cell doors clanged open not an hour later, Hannibal had elected to skip attending breakfast, concerned that the presence of so many Alphas around Will would do no favors for his slipping self-control. Will scent-marked the pillow that Hannibal clung to, renewing his scent there, and then left the Alpha curled up on their bunk with the promise that he would get all the details sorted out.

He caught Francis' eye as he entered the mess hall, and though no one would have been ruffled if Will had skipped the line to join him, he settled at the back of the queue. Francis deserted his spot without a second thought and strolled to the end of the line to join him.

"Mornin'," Will greeted, received a soft grunt from the Alpha in return.

Francis' nostrils flared, likely catching the scent of Hannibal's impending rut and the heat that burned through Will with renewed vigor. Already, he could feel the sweat breaking out along his hairline, over his upper lip and in the dip of his lower back. His core felt hollow in a way that Will knew likely wouldn't be sated with a meal. He shook his head when Francis cast a concerned look at him.

"I know," He breathed softly, then louder, "Gonna be a busy day, I think. Good day for a big breakfast. Y'know, I read recently they say with a big enough breakfast in your belly it wouldn't do any harm to skip lunch."

His gaze slid to the Alpha next to him, pleased when Francis gave him a nod of understanding. His friend straightened his spine and rolled back his thick shoulders, appearing at once to have twice as much bulk as the moment before. Francis would make his presence known at breakfast that morning, so that his absence would be felt at lunch.

They went through the rest of the line and settled at a table where a few more of Will's crew were already eating. He took a seat beside Randall and set to devouring his tray of bland eggs, greasy bacon and roll of bread, surprised at the ravenous hunger that moved his hand. Randall cast Will a sympathetic glance and moved his bread from his own tray to Will's, and only then did Will truly realize what was happening.

He may have never before experienced it, but he knew enough about his own biology to recognize the signs. He was slipping further into preheat - it could be delayed no longer. His body was attempting to consume as many calories as possible before it was flooded with hormones and he could no longer feed himself.

He gave Randall a nod of thanks and tore a chunk from the bread, swallowing greedily and taking a gulp of tangy orange juice before murmuring, "Good day for chess, I think."

The young Alpha stiffened beside him at the announcement. Despite the hormones pouring off of him, Randall didn't do Will the disservice of asking if he was sure. "I'll make sure the board is set. When's our game?"

"Let's say lunch."

"I've been reading strategies about chess," Randall told him, shifting to be more comfortable, the bandages covering his wound peeking from above his collar. "About drawing out the knights to leave the king unprotected."

Will gave a hum, his gaze sweeping around the large room. "I'd like to see your strategy today. I've got one of my own, teasing the king out with irresistible bait. We'll see if it works." He flashed the Alpha a grin, felt it widen when Randall eyed him and then moved his bacon over to Will's tray as well.

Will's daddy may have been a lying, misogynistic piece of shit, but he had to admit that the man *had* imparted Will with the skills and knowledge necessary to take over the family business. Up until Will had presented as an Omega, Beau Graham made certain that his son was educated in lessons of book and life, made sure that he could hold his own in a fist fight and, when necessary, with weapons.

He was the one that taught Will about chess - on the board and on the streets - and made sure that Will understood the value that one pawn could hold.

It was all well and good to get the cameras fixed to his liking, or get Mason's goons away from him for an hour, or make sure that Francis stayed out of sight so that no one could say for certain where he had been during the attack. It was quite another to actually draw Mason to a place where he would be alone and vulnerable.

In the end, all it took was asking the right pawn to pass along the message, someone that was known to be friendly with Will but innocuous enough that no one would suspect an underlying motive. And, of course, there would be no underlying motive as far as Peter was concerned.

He would seek out Johnson, who would be near enough to Mason for their conversation to be overheard, asking after Francis when he could not find him on his own. He would tell the man that Will was worried he was slipping into preheat, that he was going to take a cold shower and needed Francis to come immediately to protect him.

He would do so because Will asked it of him, and Will was his friend. He couldn't know that his words would be intentionally overheard by an Alpha all-too-happy to take advantage of the situation, to seize the opportunity to get Will under his thumb once and for all.

Mason found Will sitting on the floor, back against the wall with his knees pulled up to his chest, shivering under a jet of cool water. It was only partially an act, easy to let the gold flood his eyes as his head jerked up at the sound of Mason's chuckle.

He was already nude, the prick, so ready to force himself on a seemingly helpless Omega in need.

Will thought about Hannibal; his scent and his eyes, his strong, capable hands that touched him so tenderly. Sharp teeth that have sunk into and consumed human flesh, but nibbled so teasingly upon Will's own. "*Alpha,*" Will whined weakly, stretching out a hand to the circling shark.

He bared his neck to the man, flashing him the side of his throat where his failed attempt still lingered with faint red marks. Mason purred at the sight - a disgusting imitation of the pleasure and affection that rumbled through his *true* Alpha with the sound - and Will's stomach twisted in disgust.

"Always knew you were just a wet gash between legs that only needed a little pryin' to open right up for any Alpha that came by." Mason taunted, stepping closer to Will and scenting the air, staying far enough away to be outside of striking distance. Will wasn't afraid; he knew his own monster wasn't far.

"Alpha, please," he whimpered, scrambling to spread his legs wide, exposing himself to Mason. He wasn't hard - wasn't that good of an actor - but the display had the desired effect, driving Mason closer.

The Alpha cursed as he tripped on the wet tile - Will had made sure to rub a greasy layer of soap onto the floor between himself and the entrance to the stall in the hopes it would do exactly this. Mason flailed his arms out to catch himself on his way to the floor, grabbing at the low wall that separated the shower stall from the row of sinks along the opposite wall. He knocked over a large bottle of industrial-strength cleaner on his way down and Will mentally checked off another piece on the chessboard falling into place. They needn't worry about their scents lingering there now; the caustic burn of bleach would flood the nose of anyone within ten feet of the showers.

Will crawled to Mason with a pitiful mewl, clambering onto his lap and using his body weight to pin him to the floor under the pretense of grinding against him. Mason's hands came up to his hips immediately, digging his sharp nails into Will's flesh deep enough to leave gouge marks.

"Fucking slut. Already so needy for it." He gripped Will tighter, forcing his hips to move in jerky motions against him, his cock hard beneath Will's thighs. "Let's get you presenting for me, hm? So I can mount you like the bitch you are."

Mason must have missed the nearly silent sound of the door opening and closing, lost to his lust and the filth pouring from his own mouth, but Will could scent his Alpha even over the strong smell of the cleaner and the thick, acrid scent of Mason's arousal. Will ground his hips down once more before he was shooting forward, faster than smoke, to sink his teeth into Mason's shoulder.

He came away with a ragged chunk of flesh, felt entirely primal as he allowed the meat to slide down his gullet. The Alpha took several seconds to register the swift change, but before Mason could try to buck him off, Will took his head in his hands and slammed it viciously against the wet tile, pleased when he heard a sickening crack.

Suddenly, Hannibal was in his periphery and dropping to his knees beside Will. Will knew he must be a ghastly sight, chin and teeth covered in thick blood, bright red under the fluorescent lights.

"You have never looked more glorious." Hannibal breathed, taking control for the first time in all their months together and forcing their lips to meet. The Alpha lapped at the blood smearing Will's cheeks before he forced himself to part from him.

Will leaned forward to lick one more time along Hannibal's lax lips and along his teeth, tracing the shape of the man's sharp canines, before pulling away himself with a short nod.

"You're fucking dead, Graham!" Mason's words were slurred, his eyes already glazing over and disoriented from the blood loss and shock.

Will didn't reply. There was no need, at this point, no sport left in taunting a dead man. He slipped his thumbs over the vulnerable points on Mason's face, sinking in with more and more pressure until blood bubbled up around his digits, sinking deeper and deeper into the eye sockets. Mason thrashed and shouted below him, a bellow of pain quickly cut off by Hannibal's wide palm over his mouth.

Will stared at his handiwork, satisfied, at least, that those eyes would never fall lecherously upon him or his mate again. He wished fervently that something could be done about his tongue and dick as well - wished that he could tear apart every offensive bit of Mason - but knew that they had other factors to consider. A kill too malicious would look suspicious, uncharacteristic of The Dragon. No matter how effectively he tore his targets apart, it never rang as a personal attack.

They were also running out of time. He caught Hannibal's gaze for a moment and then they were both descending on the Alpha beneath them.

Hannibal sank his fangs into the same place Will had, making sure to rip the edges into jagged pieces of frayed skin, making it nearly impossible to get a bite match from any forensics efforts. Will had his hands wrapped around Mason's throat, thumbs pressing into the front of his neck as his fingers squeezed along the sides, putting pressure on all the veins that carried life-giving blood to the disgusting man's brain. That, at least, helped silence Mason's pitiful wailing.

"Will you show me how to end it?" Will asked coyly, looking up from beneath his wet bangs as the water continued to pour down around them, some of the blood that stained the white tile already swirling down the drain in a little tornado of red.

"You could snap his neck to either paralyze or to kill. Which would you prefer, sweet boy?" Hannibal purred his contentment into the space between them. The air around them felt electric, pulsing with life and shared desire.

"I want him to suffer. Slow as we can make it." Will spoke simply and with conviction, something in his belly twisting at Hannibal's words. Will had never appreciated references to his age, but his Omega preened at Hannibal's clear approval. The Alpha's pleasure thick in the space between them.

Hannibal hummed in reply, scooting slightly closer to fit his hands over Will's where they still rested at Mason's throat. "Paralyzed, then." He twisted their hands together at the same time in a sharp jerk to the side and all of the tension in Mason's body slipped out like someone had cut his strings.

"He's still alive?" Will asked, just to make sure, as he shifted off Mason's lap.

"For the moment. The head wound will most likely kill him even if we were to stop now." Hannibal phrased it in such a way as to be a question. The Alpha was checking in, making sure Will was still onboard with the plan. Will held his gaze as he slipped a thumb into his mouth to suck away the blood and viscera, a silent but clear indication that he was relishing this just as much as Hannibal.

"How long does it take a man to drown, Icarus?" Will's smirk showed his teeth and Hannibal was helpless not to return the smile.

"Roughly sixty seconds." Hannibal inclined his head slightly like a curious bird, taking in Will covered in blood and sweat and water, slick accumulating between his bare thighs.

"Help me turn him over?" Will asked, petting against Hannibal's wrist with his fingertips and feeling a spark ignite in his belly that refused to be quelled again. He was mere moments away from heat, at which point he would be lost for days to an all-consuming need. They had to hurry.

He watched as the industrial cleaner gurgled its last bit of fluid into the surrounding space and worked quickly with Hannibal to flip Mason over so that his body blocked the flow to the drain and his mouth and nose were buried in the growing puddle of water.

“Driven mad by his desire, like Ophelia, both helpless in their devotion,” Hannibal commented, taking in Will’s arched eyebrow before continuing: “It only takes a few inches of water, my darling. It will be over soon enough.” They both stepped back from the blood-soaked scene then, Will’s chest puffed with no small amount of pride and contentment, the thrill of a successful hunt with his mate burning through his veins alongside his heat.

Their arms brushed together as they moved and Will heard Hannibal’s low growl seconds before he was pinned to the wall beside the bathroom door, his lips being claimed in a nearly feral kiss.

Will pulled away gasping, putting his hand on Hannibal’s chest to maintain some distance between them. “We need to get back to our cell before it hits fully and we’re caught here, Hannibal.”

Hannibal growled his disagreement but allowed himself to be pulled from the shower area to where their dry uniforms and towels awaited them. They dried themselves hurriedly and slipped into their jumpsuits before departing, Will walking at a brisk enough pace ahead of him to cause Hannibal’s Alpha to snarl and give chase.

It was as if their righteous cause had the favor of God himself; Will and Hannibal slipped through the hallways as quickly as they slipped from the grips of their self-control and did not meet a single soul on their way back to their cell, moving like silent ghosts through the halls.

Hannibal was upon him the moment they returned, caging Will against the wall and invading his mouth desperately - Will had a feeling that the Alpha was searching for any lingering taste of their victim’s blood upon him. Will returned the kiss with every inch of his being, grasping at Hannibal’s hair, shoulders, back, pulling him closer in any way that he could.

He needed Hannibal *closer.* His hard, strong body, his spicy, dizzyingly delicious scent. A crushing need crashed over him, as though Will had been storing it away slowly over the last five months with every glance, every coy remark, every time he touched and tasted and satisfied his Alpha and denied himself the same in return - and now it was released, back to claim Will’s body and soul with a vengeance.

And he felt so empty, *so empty,* a space within him that didn’t belong there, aching to be filled. Filled by Hannibal. He knew even as a disorienting haziness burned the edges of his mind that Hannibal was the only thing that could sate him. Save him.

Between one kiss and the next, Will became aware of his nakedness; his flesh burned in the open air, damp in ways that might have been lingering water from the showers, or sweat, save the space between his thighs, which was coated with an obscene amount of slick. He realized that he didn’t remember stripping out of his jumpsuit, nor getting Hannibal out of his, but the two of them were bare, pressed as closely to one another as possible and rutting together frantically.

The loss of time, however slight it might have been, alarmed Will, set his pounding heart thundering as a swell of anxiety rose within him. “Hannibal -” he whined in distress.

Hannibal’s hand found the nape of his neck, giving him a reassuring squeeze, and then Hannibal’s lips were at his ear, uttering soothing shushes and incensing praise.

“It’s alright, my love,” Hannibal whispered, “You’re okay,” he assured him. “I have you. You’re safe.”

The Alpha pulled back, grasping both of Will’s cheeks with his large hands - they felt so cool against him, so hot in his own skin that he wondered if his sweat would eventually begin to just evaporate right off of him. His beautiful, usually whiskey-soaked eyes were entirely Alphan red with his desire, his need, but Will could still see *Hannibal* in them.

“You can fall, Will,” Hannibal promised him earnestly.

So Will did.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs!

'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

> “Mine,” Hannibal warned them, pleased when they nodded along at that. “Go,” he commanded.
>
> Randall took another step back towards the door, but Matty stood his ground, pulling another warning growl from Hannibal’s throat.
>
> “You won’t be allowed to stay together,” the corrections officer spoke slowly, treading lightly in the face of a defensive Alpha. “You have to cooperate or they’ll separate you by force. Someone could get hurt; maybe even Will.”

Chapter Notes

> Thanks for your continued support! We hope this chapter was worth the wait! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Their scents mingled in perfect compliment to one another. Smells of nature, of home and hearth, weaved together in a bouquet of autumnal memories; copper-colored, wet leaves, campfire smoke and dried sage.

It was as incensing as it was comforting, and the Alpha within Hannibal rumbled forth from his hibernation and sank his nails into Hannibal’s mind, driving him to box the Omega in, to put his teeth to his neck and apply pressure without breaking skin. *Not yet.*

He lapped up the heat-fevered sweat that covered Will’s entire body, pulling the flavor to the back of his soft palate and committing it to memory. His Alpha would always know the scent, the taste, of its mate.

“Alpha…” The Omega whimpered on a sigh of breath that tasted even sweeter than his flesh smelled. Hannibal growled, wrapping his hand around the already pliant boy’s neck and applying light pressure, just enough to have his Omega crumpling into his arms.

Hannibal moved to take Will to bed, but they never made it there, the Alpha unable to separate from his mate long enough to make it further than the floor to the right of the still-open door of their cell. An inmate walked by, a Beta, and Hannibal snarled, showing his teeth. He knew, distantly, that his eyes were flooded crimson, his hunched posture possessive and protective as he crouched over his mate.

Will tried to move and Hannibal's eyes snapped away from the Beta who was quick to rush past, a wide palm wrapping around Will's neck and holding him down to the floor on his belly. He went immediately lax, his thighs spreading accommodatingly wide for his Alpha.

"Mine." Hannibal rumbled into the sweat-matted curls that stuck to Will's neck, pulling in more of his scent, heavy with his desperate need.

"Please," Will mewled and the sound was pitiful and placating enough to draw Hannibal's body forward, his cock rutting nearly mindlessly against Will's slick-coated thighs before catching against the pliant muscle of his rim.

Hannibal had rarely felt this out of control during one of his biannual ruts. Even when he'd taken a partner for them he'd remained relatively lucid, the only real change an increased libido. This was nothing like those situations. He felt equally as desperate as the Omega beneath him, desirous with need. His Alpha was howling in the back of his mind and he felt compelled forward.

One final thrust and Hannibal's wet, aching cock was sinking into Will's warmth, his slick coating them both and making the glide smoother. Will tried to scramble to his hands and knees, his Omega guiding him instinctively into a position more conducive to breeding with his hips canted, but Hannibal held him down, keeping him pressed flat to the floor.

"Such a sweet Omega," Hannibal purred his approval at Will's obedience as the boy went slack, leaning down to bite bruising kisses into his shoulders and the back of his neck.

Will whimpered at the attention, twisting his head to bare his neck further. "Mate," he suggested with a moan. When Hannibal did not sink his teeth into Will's gland, the Omega wiggled his hips impatiently. "Move," he demanded on a needy whine.

Hannibal huffed a breathless laugh into Will's ear. "As commanding as always, even lost with need." He obeyed, even as he teased Will, because he was quickly losing hold of his own sense as well, his Alpha demanding that he rut, fuck, *fill.* He pulled back and rolled his hips forward to sink deep into the Omega, again, rumbling with pleasure as Will trembled beneath him and high, wanton cries of approval spilled from his lips.

The sounds of his Omega in the throes of pleasure incensed Hannibal in a way that he'd never before experienced. His world tunneled to nothing but himself and his mate, claws grasping the soft flesh beneath him, hips thrusting with a frantic, relentless pace. His knot filled quickly, ached for relief to make up for months of teasing, of finding release without the pressure to soothe his nature. Will moaned and scrabbled beneath him when his knot began to catch on the Omega's lax rim, attempting to arch back into it, to force it, a litany of *please* and Alpha running incoherently from him. Hannibal gave a warning growl as Will's movements began to throw off his rhythm, opening his jaw wide to lock around the nape of his neck to keep him still before he finally slammed home and stuffed him full.

Will's tight, wet heat was heaven; he contracted around Hannibal as soon as his knot settled within him, pulsing with his orgasm to a cry so high and sharp that Hannibal could hear it echoing off the walls. His own release spilled then, his balls drawing up to pump his seed deep into his mate with a feral snarl. He released Will's neck, pleased to see that he'd

retained enough control not to leave any mark beyond the slight indentation of his fangs. He nuzzled the area, showered Will's neck with licks and kisses before tilting his head to nuzzle and scent against Will's cheek.

"Hannibal…" Will panted, and then gave a soft grunt as he tried to shift beneath Hannibal's weight. He gave a low whine when he was unsuccessful in altering anything about their position.

Hannibal shushed him as he gathered the Omega in his arms and twisted their bodies, still locked together but resting on their sides so that Will was not crushed into the cold, hard floor with the brunt of his Alpha's weight atop him. Hannibal curled around him protectively, his instincts screaming at him to cover and protect his vulnerable mate and any offspring they may have just conceived.

"They'll come for us soon," Will murmured, burrowing back against Hannibal's chest so that they laid together as close as possible. "They'll pull us apart; stick you in seg, me in the infirmary."

"I'll rip apart anyone who tries to touch you," Hannibal vowed. He didn't bother to mention that there was one way to ensure they were allowed to remain together. He tucked his nose behind Will's ear, breathed in the sweet scent of sated Omega.

When his knot went down, Hannibal pulled free and Will made a soft, despondent sound. Hannibal shushed the Omega and pushed himself to his knees, gathering Will in his arms and moving them over to the lower bunk. He laid Will out onto his back and then climbed onto the bed, kneeling between thighs spread wide for him. And then he dipped down, rucked up Will's knees and lapped over his leaking hole.

Will gave a surprised shout and moaned, working his hips to push closer to Hannibal's mouth. Hannibal pulled away with a growl, hands moving to anchor Will's slim hips to the bed. "I told you I would take care of you, Will. Let me do my job."

He ducked down once more, licking at the place where his seed leaked from his Omega. He rumbled out a pleased purr at the taste of them mingled together, his bitter release laced with the sweetness of Will's slick.

Will let out the sweetest whimper of need but remained still for Hannibal, the Omega surprisingly well behaved and pliant after so many months of teasing torment. "Such a good boy," Hannibal murmured into the supple, sweet flesh of Will's thighs, taking a few moments to simply enjoy their combined scents as his semen sluggishly leaked out of the boy below him.

"Alpha-" Will breathed out, but Hannibal took that moment to return to his hole, pointing his tongue and slipping it inside, past his mate's red, abused rim, their flavors exploding on his tongue. Like winter woods and spun sugar, both calming and electrifying at the same time. He needed more.

He pushed forward, spreading Will's thighs wide around his shoulders and he held him open with both hands, the thick trail of his Alphan seed was unfamiliar on his tongue, but when

consumed alongside the sweet and lightly spiced flavor of his mate, it was a welcome taste. Like ambrosia, Will's slick coated Hannibal's lips and chin and tongue and still he was desperate for more.

Will remained still for several moments before he lost his composure and tried to push himself down against Hannibal's tongue again, and this time, the Alpha let him. Will was panting, his flanks heaving and his body covered in sweat and slick and come.

Hannibal redoubled his efforts, determined to draw another orgasm from Will with only his tongue. The Omega keened at the wet, probing kisses Hannibal littered his hole and thighs with, cleaning them of his slick before returning to collect the rest of his own release. It was an internal battle within him to allow himself the pleasure of consuming his mate in this way, his Alpha growling on the sidelines at the removal of his seed.

"I'm going to breed you full, Omega. Fill you up with my pups until no one can mistake who you belong to." Hannibal bit viciously into the tender skin of Will's thigh, pulling away to appreciate the writhing mess he'd made of his Omega as the man came again, his slick leaking from him and his seed splashed across his taut lower abdomen.

His Alpha preened at a job well done.

Suddenly, Hannibal was on his back, snarling up at an Omega staring him down through slitted eyes and with far more strength than his gender or his lithe muscles would suggest.

"You belong to *me,* Alpha. You're *mine.*" Will didn't hesitate to straddle Hannibal's flexing thighs, returning every growl the Alpha gave him at the new position, before sinking down to the hilt with one abrupt downward thrust of his hips.

They both moaned at the sensation, Will's hole even warmer than before as his body dropped further into heat. "Will, Omega-" Hannibal clawed at Will's strong thighs, drawing blood and still doing nothing to stop his mate from taking his pleasure.

Will set a gruelling pace as he rode the Alpha, taking him in deeply enough that Hannibal felt his cockhead slam against Will's soft, open cervix with each thrust. Logically, he knew that Will was most likely not fertile now, after years of suppressant use and with this being his first heat, but his Alpha didn't care. Solely focused on breeding the Omega above him.

"Tell me you're mine, Icarus. Wanna hear you say it," Will panted as he kept up the undulations of his body, Hannibal's knot beginning to form again and already teasing at the Omega's rim each time he drove his hips down.

"I'm yours, Will. Wholly and completely." Hannibal managed to pant between gasps and growls, his Alpha prowling dangerously close to the surface and threatening to slip Hannibal fully enough into rut to lose control.

Will's grin went feral at the words and then, before Hannibal could even think to protest, the Omega's sharp fangs were buried in Hannibal's scent gland and Will bit down hard enough that Hannibal immediately smelled the sharp copper of his own blood. And then, seconds

later, he felt something snap into place inside of him. A place he hadn't realized was empty, echoing just as lonely as any of the halls of his memory palace, was filled with Will.

They were bonded.

Hannibal's hips arched off the bed and his claws dug tighter into Will's hips, forcing the Omega down onto his knot as his orgasm barrelled through him without warning. Will purred against his neck in response, spilling what little fluid his body could across Hannibal's abdomen as he lapped at his claiming mark, still sluggishly leaking blood.

"Oh shit -"

"Fuck's sake, you guys -"

The voices permeated the haze that was quickly flooding Hannibal's brain. He might have ignored them if it hadn't been for the sharp scent of foreign Alpha that invaded the room along with them.

Hannibal's Alpha took control of his limbs, wrapping around the Omega and rolling their bodies so that his larger bulk was sheltering his mate from the outsiders. He bared his fangs and gave a ferocious snarl to the unwelcome guests, even as he registered the familiar forms of Randall and Matty. Friends or not, they were Alphas first in Hannibal's mind, and therefore a threat to his mate, to their incomplete bond, and to their unborn child, as unlikely and distant as that concept may be.

Will mewled beneath him, instinctively shrinking to make himself smaller as their territory was encroached upon. He didn't want to further frighten or distress his mate, so when the two men raised their hands and took a step back, Hannibal ceased his growling. His hard gaze, however, remained locked upon them.

"Mine," he warned them, pleased when they nodded along at that. "Go," he commanded.

Randall took another step back towards the door, but Matty stood his ground, pulling another warning growl from Hannibal's throat.

"You won't be allowed to stay together," the corrections officer spoke slowly, treading lightly in the face of a defensive Alpha. "You have to cooperate or they'll separate you by force. Someone could get hurt; maybe even Will."

Inside, Hannibal knew what Matty was saying, understood the sentiment behind his words. But threatening harm upon his mate was the *wrong* course of action. His Alpha howled in fury at the suggestion of something, *anything* causing Will pain; the implication that it would be his fault.

He longed to lunge at the offender, to rip his throat out and dispose of his body, to get his scent away from *his* Will, but he was still tied to his love, would be for another few minutes at least, and the moment he jostled them, Will let loose an entreating whine.

"You can't force them apart, Matty. They're bonded."

“Not entirely,” Matty argued. “His rut will suck, but Will could still get through his heat - No!”

But the CO’s denial came too late. The moment Hannibal’s Alpha was reminded that his Omega did not bear his mark, he sought to correct it. He curled a fist into Will’s sweat-soaked hair and wrenched his head to the side, sinking his fangs into the Omega’s throat. He made his bite wide, large enough to break through the scent gland to finish their bond and also cross over the fading mark that a rival had left there so many weeks ago.

Will’s blood flooded his mouth, thick and spicy, laced with the cloying hormones from his heat. It was one more part of his mate that Hannibal finally got to taste and he moaned for it, certain that he could find sustenance for the rest of his days in nothing but *Will*.

The Omega’s cry was one of ecstasy, squeezing around Hannibal’s knot as he came again, dry this time, incensing Hannibal enough to remain swollen, to flood his Omega’s belly with another load of seed. The connection that he’d felt with Will intensified, took a new shape as the two pieces of their souls seemed to melt together into one, forging a bond that could never be broken. Just as he could feel Will within him, he could now find himself within Will. They were united, conjoined. Forever.

They were left alone after that, the prison staff conceding to their right to a shared rut and heat as a mated couple. They closed the cell door and kept it locked at all times, save for when a Beta brought them food and drink.

In one of their first moments of shared lucidity after bonding, Hannibal and Will hauled their mattresses and blankets to the floor, even adding their rumpled jumpsuits to the makeshift nest. They stayed there, limbs tangled together in sleep whenever they weren’t making love, and remained that way for the next four days.

Will woke with Hannibal wrapped around him in their small nest, his scent softened and sated in post-rut contentment. The fire that had burned under Will’s skin for the last several days had abated, leaving a low simmering arousal still sparking in his blood. He no longer felt out of control with need, his head finally clear for the first time since they’d killed Mason.

They were on their sides, Will’s back to Hannibal’s chest. He could feel the thick hair that covered his Alpha scratch softly against his back, could feel the hard press of his arousal along Will’s ass. He was growing wet with slick, not as copious as it had been during his heat, but just as arousing, it seemed; he could hear Hannibal’s rumbling growl, feel it vibrate through him, as the Alpha woke to Will grinding back against him.

“Will,” Hannibal moaned, his strong arms wrapping tightly around Will’s middle, pulling him firmly against him. “Will, may I -”

Will interrupted him by reaching between them to wrap a small hand around Hannibal’s thick cock, giving it several firm strokes, bringing him to full hardness and slipping him between

his wet cheeks, taking him inside with a low whimper. It was a bittersweet sensation, his hole fucked out and sore while the ghost of the aching need to be filled still pulsed in his core.

“Fuck,” Will groaned, spreading his thighs and hooking his leg over Hannibal’s calf, forcing the Alpha’s cock even deeper. *His Alpha.* How could he have waited so long to feel Hannibal buried within him, when now that he’s had a taste the thought of being separated was abhorrent? “Harder, Alpha, fuck me,” Will mewled, taking his own cock in hand.

Hannibal slapped his hand away and wrapped his much larger palm around Will, fully encompassing his cock as the Alpha started thrusting harder, his other arm wrapping underneath Will to pull him even closer to him, no space left between their bodies.

It was quick after that, and they lay twined together in their nest, sated and covered in slick and come. “I thought you would never be more beautiful than you were that night, but you are even more beautiful when you’re *mine.*” Hannibal purred, nosing against Will’s bond mark.

Will knew Hannibal wasn’t talking about his heat. He remembered the primal, feral look in the Alpha’s eyes as he’d watched Will stand victorious over their enemy. He’d seen the way it affected him to share in a kill together. When Hannibal’s knot went down, Will turned in his arms and tucked his head beneath his chin.

I always was yours he thought to himself. Outloud, Will hummed in reply, snuggling deeper into his Alpha’s arms and smearing a smile into his skin.

“Took ya fuckin’ long enough,” Randall laughed, scenting Will’s cheek with his own when he was finally released from the infirmary later in the evening. Nurse Alana had released both he and Hannibal right in time for dinner. They’d been taken from their cell that morning, Hannibal only putting up a small grumble of protest at being temporarily separated from his mate.

Will hugged the Alpha in return before throwing himself at Francis, burying his nose in the man’s neck and breathing in his familiar, soothing scent. The Alpha chuckled and wrapped his arms tightly around the Omega, meeting Hannibal’s eyes over his shoulder. Hannibal didn’t protest the proximity to his mate, they were practically family and he could smell the boy’s joy in his scent; warm like fresh grass under a midday sun; just beneath that he could still smell his own seed, driven deep into his Omega, and it soothed something in him.

“We took care of things while you were indisposed,” the Dragon cleared his throat a bit awkwardly and Hannibal caught the pink beginnings of a blush against his cheeks.

“Indisposed is hardly the word I’d use,” Will laughed into Francis’ shoulder, stepping away to take him in. “I was so worried they’d’ve taken you away.” He hugged the man once more for good measure before leaning back into the waiting arms of his Alpha. “What happened after?”

Francis and Randall took turns catching them up on events within the prison over the last week. Mason's body had been found not long after they'd left it and Francis had immediately been thrown into seg while an investigation was started. The security staff quickly realized they didn't have much of a case against Francis and had been forced to release him back into the general population. They'd set their sights on Will next, but with him being in heat they'd written him off as an unlikely candidate. Which also cleared Hannibal of any potential blowback as it was well documented they were together during their shared heat and rut.

The few brutes that had normally trailed after Mason had been uncharacteristically docile, keeping to themselves and making no attempt to upset the power balance that Francis and Randall had held in check in Will's absence.

Will didn't think they'd end up being much of a problem, as grateful as anyone to finally be out from under Mason's thumb, though he still didn't trust any of them and asked his boys to keep an ear out for any sign that they might make a move upon Will or his crew.

It was late in the evening, nearly time for lights out, when Will was summoned to an impromptu session with Chilton. Hannibal watched as his mate was led out of their shared cell by an unfamiliar CO, a growing sense of worry in the pit of his stomach.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs!

'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

> “I just felt the need to inform you that, as your appointed psychiatrist, I don’t feel that a release from your sentence is productive, nor is it advised. I’m afraid I’m going to have to fight this, Will.”
>
> Will swallowed his ire, giving a half-hearted shrug with a countenance of blank stoicism. “You go ahead and do or don’t do whatever you feel is right. It’s not your job to get me out. That responsibility falls to my lawyer.”

Chapter Notes

> We hope you guys enjoy the introduction of a new, favorite ship of ours! Only two chapters to go! Thanks again for reading and for all of your support. <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will stared at the Beta across from him, waiting for him to speak. The man in question seemed content with swivelling from side to side in his leather chair, platinum-plated fountain pen perched against his lips in a way that the Beta no doubt considered thoughtful. He hadn’t spoken since Will’s arrival, and while normally Will would be more than fine to let the silence stew between them, he found an unfamiliar anxiety settling beneath his skin; a nervous energy that continued to build exponentially within him each moment that he was separated from his mate.

Less words from Chilton meant less chance of Will losing his patience and verbally bitch-slapping the psychiatrist - a seemingly inevitable way for their sessions to end as of late, but Will just wanted him to get on with it so he could go back to his cell, curl up in the warm, safe, loving embrace of his Alpha. Will reminded himself that he was under far more scrutiny now that he was actively attempting a sentence modification and held his tongue, even though every impatient instinct within him was screaming at him to demand Chilton to fucking get on with it already.

“It’s been brought to my attention that you have filed an appeal with the court,” Chilton drawled at last.

There it was. “That’s right.”

“Going for time served? Very ambitious indeed, Mr. Graham.” Chilton let out a chuckle that Will could only describe as *greasy.* “I wonder what it is you hope to accomplish.”

Will blinked at the Beta, momentarily taken aback. “I’d settle for my freedom.”

Chilton’s smarmy face twisted into a mocking grin. “And leave your new mate behind?”

He felt his stomach twist at the thought, even though it couldn’t be farther from the truth. He hated that Chilton’s gaze upon his neck made him feel self-conscious, made him twitch with the desire to shy away, hide Hannibal’s mark that he was so proud to bear. He bit his tongue against the urge to share that Hannibal had plans of his own for an early release. It wouldn’t do any good to get Chilton involved in his Alpha’s business with careless words spoken out of spite.

“I just felt the need to inform you that, as your appointed psychiatrist, I don’t feel that a release from your sentence is productive, nor is it advised. I’m afraid I’m going to have to fight this, Will.”

Will swallowed his ire, giving a half-hearted shrug with a countenance of blank stoicism. “You go ahead and do or don’t do whatever you feel is right. It’s not your job to get me out. That responsibility falls to my lawyer.”

He turned to leave, the heavy weight in his gut lightening with every step closer to the door. Chilton’s voice rang out behind him, giving him pause.

“Your lawyer, yes. Ms. Verger, isn’t it? *Shame* about her brother. I wonder how the poor dear has taken the news.”

He was being goaded, he knew that even as he released the doorknob and turned back to the Beta. “We all deal with grief in different ways. Perhaps Ms. Verger is the type to seek distraction, throw herself into her work.”

“Perhaps,” Chilton nodded sagely. “I only wonder if she’ll *want* to. Her client being responsible and all.”

His lips pulled into a snarl before he could help himself. “A bold accusation. One which, I’m sure you are aware, has already been disproven. I was quite busy at the time of the incident, you’ll recall.”

Chilton gave a hum at that - one which indicated clearly that he was not going to buy what Will was selling. “Yes, I heard. A *marvellous* alibi. Nearly iron-clad.”

Will gave a nod and turned back to the door, ripping it open with a bit more force than necessary.

“*Nearly,* Will,” Chilton repeated to his retreating back.

Will let the door slam shut behind him and stalked back to his cell, upset more than anything that a man like Chilton could ever unnerve him.

He arrived back at their cell not long before lock-up, pacing agitatedly as he waited for the privacy of their closed cell.

Hannibal was quick to embrace him when he returned, to scent him and purr deeply, exuding calming pheromones. Will knew that the Alpha longed to grasp his neck, to gentle him and force the tension from his frame. He loved Hannibal for resisting the urge. For respecting Will's boundaries.

Will spoke as soon as the door clanged shut, sealing them in their own bubble for the next nine hours.

"Chilton just threatened me." Will breathed, rubbing tiredly at his face; Hannibal gave a low growl at the information. "He has very strong suspicions that I was involved in Mason's death."

"Suspicions," Hannibal repeated. "Not proof. There is no proof, Will."

"Chilton's like a fuckin' dog with a bone, baby. He won't stop 'til he gets what he's wantin'," Will threw himself onto the bottom bunk, breathing in Hannibal's scent mixed with laundry detergent in their fresh sheets. They'd been forced to take apart their nest at the end of his heat and a part of him still ached at its loss, his Omegan nature still lingering close to the surface so soon after his first heat and their bond.

"What, exactly, does he want, my love?" Hannibal followed after Will like a man on a leash, and Will couldn't help but smile when he felt the bed dip beside him, the Alpha's warm, welcome palm soothing along his flank.

"Well, my Icarus, he thinks I'm also full of hubris I 'spose. He wants to control me. To put me on his shelf like a trophy to show off," Will stopped himself from dipping into a full tirade, suddenly exhausted and only wanting to sleep curled close to his Alpha.

"What is it, darling?" Hannibal noticed Will's stiffening and removed his hand, mistaking Will's distress for not wanting to be soothed. It was the exact opposite.

"You can, you know," Will grumbled into the pillow. Suddenly wanting nothing more than to temporarily escape from the world that threatened to crush him sometimes.

"Can what?" Hannibal played dumb, Will knew the Alpha was aware of exactly what Will *wasn't* saying but was clearly asking for. He craved his mate's touch, wanted him to soothe him like only an Alpha could.

"Don't be an asshole, Hannibal. It ain't a cute look on a man your age," Will teased and earned himself a soft growl of smug pleasure as the Alpha moved closer, wrapping a broad hand against the back of Will's neck and squeezing gently. Will's entire body went immediately lax, all of the tension bleeding out of him at the soothing gesture. And then it got even better.

"Relax, Omega," Hannibal's voice was laced with an unmistakable timbre, the sound of an Alpha with a *Voice*. The calming lilt soaked into Will's hormone and stress-addled brain and every worry he had suddenly felt much less important. The concern and fear pressing in around him all distant memories, all replaced by a floaty, hazy peace.

He felt Hannibal move to cover him with his entire body, pressing Will flat on his belly to the mattress as Hannibal slotted himself into place above him, a heavy and reassuring weight that worked to push Will even further into that overwhelming contentment of Omega space.

"Sleep, darling," Hannibal whispered into the baby-fine hairs that curled around Will's ears. And Will did.

"I hear congratulations are in order," Margot smiled, standing when Hannibal entered the room and taking her seat again when he was chained to the table. Officer Brown wasn't nearly as friendly with Hannibal as he was with Will and didn't bend any rules for the Alpha.

Hannibal inclined his head in thanks, a smile playing at his lips. "Thank you, Ms. Verger. I've heard the same for you." His eyes shone dangerously, his meaning unmistakable.

"It has been… a very difficult time for the family. I've decided to throw myself into my work to process it all."

"Of course," Hannibal smirked, placing his hands neatly folded atop one another on the tabletop.

"Hannibal, I've just been to see the judge. The prosecution has gone missing and the judge is threatening to proceed without them. The request I've put on the table is time served plus four months. So you'd be out of here in early March." Margot was clearly excited, her entire body perched on the edge of her seat and thrumming with energy. Hannibal had the thought that she was glowing, she looked resplendent without the shadow of her brother cast over her.

"What of Will?" Hannibal asked bluntly. He found, for the first time in his life, that he couldn't imagine his world alone anymore.

"Hannibal -" Margot began, but stopped at the Alpha's raised hand.

"I will not proceed with the appeal without him, Ms. Verger."

She heaved a put-upon sigh and settled back into her chair. "Louisiana is stuck in the dark ages in a lot of ways. I'm already working on his acquittal, it wouldn't have been nearly as short or tidy as yours, but now that you've bonded…" she paused, looking thoughtful.

Hannibal raised a brow in question, indicating for her to continue.

"Will is a proud man, Hannibal. But he'd be stupid not to take any out offered to him." She paused again, worrying her fingers together anxiously in her lap. "He's a young Omega. Newly mated. We could make a case that having an Alpha, *a mature Alpha*, will not only provide him with structure and soothe his presumed anger issues, but also that it would be

cruel and unusual punishment to separate bonded mates. The state of Louisiana still allows the release of mated Omega inmates into the care and custody of their Alpha. It's the best angle we could push for once you're released."

"How long would we be separated?" Hannibal was already pouring over innumerable paths in his mind, seeking the most favorable outcome.

"A matter of weeks at the most. Louisiana is slow for paperwork, but Will has some important friends on the outside and we could probably expedite it…" She trailed off again, eyeing Hannibal until he returned her gaze, prompting her to continue. "Do I need to speak to Will about this?"

Hannibal shook his head, "I'll talk to Will. You should proceed with this course of action. It would be best to get things moving along as swiftly as possible."

Margot nodded and stood, knowing a dismissal when she heard it. She gathered her jacket from the back of her chair and shrugged it on gracefully, fastening the shining buttons swiftly to protect her slim form from the brisk November winds. "Congratulations again, Hannibal," she bid, so sincere, "He seems like a really sweet boy. I hope you two are happy together."

Hannibal had no hope of stopping the soft smile that curled his lips when he considered his mate. "We are."

Back straight, shoulders down, knees together...

They were instructions hammered into her since she was just a pup; by all rights, should be a level of decorum that would fall upon her naturally. Margot found the mental reminders to be necessary in this particular moment, lest she break into a joyful dance. There would be plenty of time for that later, she wagered.

She could dance on top of that fucker's grave for the rest of her natural-born life.

Expression solemn, somber. Let the eyes go damp, no one needs to know they are actually tears of relief.

Margot Verger sat in the front row of chairs, quite early for the event, going over the final business necessary with the funeral director.

"Are you certain you wouldn't rather your father handle this, darlin'?"

Margot forced herself not to rankle at the director's patronizing tone, twisted her face into a watery smile. "Our - my father is in poor health. I'm afraid the shock of losing his only son has only worsened his condition. He won't be attending."

And good riddance to that bastard as well.

The man gave her a sad smile. "Perhaps an uncle, then?"

Margot took a calming breath and wet her lips. “I’ve been working with the Board of Directors to keep Verger Farms running since my brother was incarcerated, as well as growing my own legal practice from the ground up full time. I’m certain I can handle one funeral.”

She opened her clutch and passed the Alpha her credit card. He eyed it for a moment before accepting it with another nod. “I’ll just go get your final invoice,” he informed her tightly before taking his leave.

Margot let out an irritated sigh; one more Alpha prick that couldn’t handle the thought of an Omega taking charge of something. Her gaze fell to the open coffin at the front of the room. At least there was one less of those in the world now.

She stood swiftly and strode up to the casket, taking one last look at her tormentor - despite the trauma to the eyes, the mortician was able to use their considerable skills to mollify the funeral-goers into believing that the corpse was merely slumbering peacefully, rather than about to become food for the worms.

The longer she looked, the more she realized that whoever worked on her brother seemed to capture the pure insanity of his rictus grin quite nicely. She let the upper portion of the casket lid swing closed with a loud bang.

“You sure tore him a new asshole.”

A voice sounded to her left, and Margot startled momentarily, gaze drawn to the young woman placing a new arrangement of flowers that consisted mostly of bright, happy daffodils to the side of the casket. Flowers that she was certain she had not ordered and, she noted, were wildly inappropriate to send to a funeral. She vaguely recalled that daffodils were said to symbolize new beginnings and prosperity, and her thoughts immediately flickered to Will as she studied the woman a bit closer.

“I beg your pardon?”

“The Alpha? Assuming that you can’t handle passing over a piece of plastic and signing your name for a wooden box and some flowers because you’re what, a woman, or an Omega? Both, probably? Prick.”

Margot eyed the woman with a frown, taking in her bronzed skin and long, sleek, black hair. The Beta seemed to grow cagey under her gaze, shrugged and turned away quickly.

“Well, anyways, enjoy the flowers,” she tacked on breezily.

Margot strode after her. “I know who you are.”

The woman kept on, though she seemed to pick up the pace slightly. “Just a delivery girl.”

“Katz, isn’t it? I *do* research my clients. I know you work for Will Graham.”

Beverly Katz froze and turned back toward her, mouth set in a thin line. She glanced around as the murmurs and shuffling of arriving guests sounded around them, and then nodded to the

small room off to the side that served as an antechamber for the more distraught mourners.

Margot followed the Beta, closed the door behind her to afford a bit more privacy.

The room was covered in garish gold and silver adornments, smelled heavily of potpourri and held more velour upholstered furniture than Margot felt should ever be allowed inside one room. She leaned her body against a low table that held several boxes of tissues and nearly as many Jesus figurines.

“Ms. Verger,” Beverly began, and Margot held up a hand.

“If I’m on such personal terms with your employer, I hardly think it necessary for us to be so formal,” she smirked, showing her teeth.

Bev scoffed, rolling her eyes. “Will is *not* my employer. He’s my asshole best friend. My sometimes headache of a nightmare, especially when it comes to keeping him out of trouble. He’s my brother. Not my boss.”

Margot nodded, crossing her arms over her chest in contemplation. “Your -” she paused, thinking over the words Beverly had just used to describe Will. “I owe a great debt to your family.”

Bev huffed and took a seat in one of the overstuffed, crushed velour chairs, her arms wide along the back cushion and her legs spread wide in a vagrant display of dominance.

“That so? Can’t imagine why. Seems to me it’s Will that owes you. For representin’ him and all,” Katz teased, warm brown eyes testing Margot.

“Will listens to you. I doubt he’d take this well from me, but there’s a way we could expedite his release to coincide with Hannibal’s,” Margot grew serious. She didn’t have time to flirt with cute Betas; she had a job to do. And a party for one to plan in honor of her dearly departed brother.

Bev’s face also grew serious as she leaned forward in her chair, propping an elbow on her knee, the black leather of her motorcycle jacket gleaming in the low lighting of the room. “If you already think he won’t like it, I can assure you he’ll hate it.” She prompted.

“He and Hannibal are already mated. That gives him the option in the great state of Louisiana to be released into the custody of his Alpha.”

“Gotta love misogyny,” Bev interrupted, a moue of disdain pulling her lips down. “Please tell me you didn’t suggest that to him? He’ll hate it. He won’t do it.”

Margot stalled, arms falling to her sides as she pushed herself off the table and started to pace. “I told *Hannibal* to discuss it with him.”

Bev whistled, shaking her head. “Man, you really don’t know a damn thing about Will, do ya?”

Margot gave an empty smile in reply. “So I gather Will wouldn’t be too keen if I told him to work a pregnancy angle for early release?”

Katz went totally still, her frown morphing into something entirely *other*, as though she were remembering a particularly unpleasant memory. She shook herself out of it and went to her feet, stopping in front of the pacing Omega.

“Will would fire you on the spot and say to Hell with the whole appeal just on principle. You better give me your number,” Beverly suggested with a put-upon sigh, though her dark eyes still sparkled with unmasked flirtation, forcing a short laugh from Margot.

“Why would I do that?” She stopped walking and looked back at the woman in front of her. Her hair was thrown over one shoulder, spilling down past her throat and she wasn’t just a void of scent the way most Betas were. She smelled wonderful; like fresh hay in a stable. Like the air right before a rainstorm.

“To go over Will’s case, of course.” The Beta winked, a broad grin causing her eyes to sparkle with mirth. She really was gorgeous.

“Of course.,” Margot agreed with a wry twist of her lips.

Beverly shifted her weight forward slightly, invading Margot’s space with barely a breath of movement. “I reckon you could use all the help you can get, and no one knows that prickly bastard like I do.”

“Well then,” Margot gave a nod of agreement, “I would certainly appreciate any assistance you would be willing to give.”

Margot’s heart beat just a little faster upon seeing Beverly’s answering grin.

Chapter End Notes

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'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

> “I’m not a Graham,” Bev pointed out.
>
> “No,” Will agreed. “You’re better. You’re Beverly fuckin’ Katz.” He was pleased when her lips curled into a smile at that. “And you’ll always have me, if you need me, but I don’t want all *that* to be my life anymore. I can’t.”
>
> His best friend cast him a suspicious glance. “You in the family way, Will?”

Chapter Notes

> Great, big, GIGANTIC thank you for the continued support throughout the posting of this story! We are so touched by the positive response. Watch for the epilogue after the New Year!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You had *no fuckin’ right,* Hannibal!”

Will had been spitting a variant of that sentiment for the last thirty minutes, and Hannibal had quit trying to placate the furious Omega about ten minutes in, strategically choosing to wait out the storm instead.

He was uncertain if it was poor or proper planning to have waited until lock-up to have this conversation. Will paced about their cell agitatedly, his ire flooding the small space with a burnt, acrid smell that made Hannibal’s nose itch.

“Will -” he tried again, but speaking only reminded the Omega that the source of his irritation was present, and Will spun on him.

“*My* lawyer, *my* case! You have no idea - you could never have *any* idea how hard I’ve worked not to be just *some Alpha’s Omega*.”

Worse than his formidable rage was the misery that suddenly clogged his mate’s throat, his voice thick with emotion. They hadn’t fallen yet - Hannibal knew that Will would not allow them to - but he could smell the tears burning the Omega’s eyes all the same.

The Alpha within him beat against the cage in which Hannibal had locked it away, howling to take control of the situation. The monster beneath his skin prowled restlessly, waiting for the

opportune moment to gain the upper hand in this conversation, to turn it down a path that would be more productive. Hannibal didn't know how Will would react at the moment if he used his Voice to his advantage, given the sore subject that started Will's tirade, so he resisted the urge.

He did stand from his spot on the lower bunk, though, and strode toward Will until he was instinctively backing away to retain his personal space. When Hannibal caged him against the wall, Will lashed out with fists and claws to keep him back - a wholly half-hearted attempt; Will allowed Hannibal to snag his wrists in a gentle grip almost immediately. Finally, the Omega sagged back against the wall behind him.

"Look at me," Hannibal entreated. When Will glanced stubbornly to the side, Hannibal released a low, unbidden growl of frustration. "Don't make me force you to. Look at me, Will. Please."

Will set his jaw and reluctantly turned his stony gaze to Hannibal's face. His eyes were a tempest-tossed sea and just as wet, boring a hole straight through him even through his film of tears.

"I will not leave you alone in here, Will. I cannot, so please do not ask it of me. When I am released they will almost certainly allow the same for you, if you consent to sign into my care," Hannibal ignored the snarling of his Alpha, forced his words to leave him clearly and evenly; calm words could so easily hold more weight than those spoken with emotion, if one arranged them in the correct fashion. Will opened his mouth to protest again, but Hannibal cut him off.

"It's only on paper, my love. If you know me at all then you know I could never truly believe that you *belonged* to me." Hannibal released Will's wrists and brought one hand up to tenderly cradle Will's clenched jaw. "I don't believe there exists a force on this earth that could subdue you. Nor do I envy any that would attempt to."

He could see that Will's small smile was reluctant, but it was there all the same. "I belong to you a *little,*" he amended softly.

"We belong to *each other,*" Hannibal corrected. "Now and always. Please do not throw away this chance to live our lives to the fullest to maintain a modicum of pride. No one would fault you for allowing it, just this once."

The sharp, pungent scent of Will's anger had mostly abated, replaced by his natural scent, the scent of the Bayou. Will swallowed, blinked away his tears, and the next time he looked at Hannibal it was with an embellished air of annoyance.

"You're a pain in the ass, y'know that?"

Hannibal couldn't stop the smile that curled his lips as relief unfurled within him, replacing the heavy and unwelcome knot that his stomach had become. "I do not doubt it."

"I love you," Will added softly. "Idiot." And then he pressed forward for a kiss.

Will didn't doubt that Hannibal had known distress in his life. He knew enough about the man's history to know that Mason's abuse had been nothing in the grand scheme of things, hadn't even scratched the surface of the injustices he had been subject to, especially in his youth. War had a tendency to make monsters of the best men, and the men Hannibal had been exposed to hadn't started off as the best of their kind.

Which is why he found himself sitting, legs crossed and palms sat flat to Hannibal's knees where the Alpha sat across from him, in the late evening, the blood-red light of the fading winter sun spilling against their cell door as they settled in for last-call.

They'd been talking for an hour already, voices soft and intimate as breath between them. Will had framed this exercise as a game; a way for them to get to know one another even better. Their bond had settled in perfectly, neither of them had expected otherwise, but the depth of it was still surprising to both of them. Will, who already felt so much, felt a nearly overwhelming amount from Hannibal; a man who, on the surface, appeared to feel nothing at all.

"Tell me about your father, Will. The truth of him," Hannibal asked, tears still threatening to spill from his eyes after Will had asked him about Mischa. The entire conversation about his mate's sister had hollowed Will out, left him feeling full of sorrow and a desperate longing he'd never experienced, with the lingering impression on the backs of his eyelids of a girl with straight blonde hair and eyes as dark as a summer storm.

"A bit lazy, doctor, but I'll play along," Will smiled, though it still felt watery and dangerously close to crumbling.

He'd never even told Bev everything. Had never dared to tell Francis for fear of what he might try to do to his daddy. Beau Graham was a dangerous, unpredictable man. Will would never have forgiven himself if something had happened to Francis for acting on his behalf.

"A lot of the worst stuff started up after I presented," Will began, taking a calming breath of his mate's scent, soothed by Hannibal's warm presence and his broad palms on Will's wrists as he held him closer.

"He'd always been casually abusive in that way that powerful men often have. He'd beat me for the smallest infractions, slapped me hard enough across the face to draw blood a couple times. Gave me plenty of black eyes," Will trailed off, looking over Hannibal's shoulder and back into the haze of his childhood.

"I didn't know until the day I killed him that he'd killed my mama. He'd always told everyone that she ran off. And nearly all her family was dead by then, there ain't no one around even today that misses her but me, ya know? No one who woulda looked," his eyes burned at the memory. He only had the faintest recollections of her scent, hardwired into his brain as *pack*, as *family*. She'd smelled warm, like sunshine and cotton.

"What happened after you presented as Omega?" Hannibal tried to focus him, dragging Will's eyes back to his own.

“He called up his doctor and forced me to go through a pretty fuckin’ invasive procedure to *verify*, like he couldn’t believe he’d been cursed with a breeder for a kid. And during the procedure he made sure the doc checked me to ensure I was a virgin. Since the only worth I had left at that point was my ability to be sold off for matin’ and breedin’,” Will clenched his fists tight enough to dig his nails into his skin, Hannibal reaching out slowly, with telegraphed movements, to uncurl his hands and hold them in his own.

“An absolutely archaic practice that has been outlawed in more civilized states and countries,” Hannibal commented. His hands felt so warm, so comforting against Will’s own. He allowed them to ground him, to keep him from falling too far into the memory.

“Couple days later is when he told me he’d found someone for me. He was gonna sell me off. I tried to argue and he slipped up and threatened to be rid of me like he’d rid himself of my mama, and I just knew. I saw it all in that moment, like I was watchin’ it on a movie screen. He’d killed her and dumped the body in the swamps, his Omega worth nothin’ more to him than gator food ‘cause she’d threatened to leave him and take me. My daddy was a powerful man, Hannibal, but he was also a scared one. Powerful men are often bitterly and dangerously afraid of losing that power, and his came to him tenuously enough as it was.”

“So you took back your own power in that moment. And in doing so, ensured that you also returned your mother’s power to her, in your own way.” Hannibal whispered the words into Will’s curls, stirring them gently against his forehead where the Alpha was breathing in his scent, lips pressed flush to his skin.

And for once in his life, Will felt powerful all on his own. Not for his family name, or ‘cause he’d killed an Alpha bigger and stronger than himself. Not because his mate was an apex predator. But because he had his own power, his own monster curled and slumbering in his belly, infusing his spine with steel and iron, and he had control. He could release it whenever it suited him, could also temper it when he so desired, and that brought a smirk to curl up his lips as he found Hannibal’s own and kissed him until the room went dark.

Hannibal had always slept lightly, like a predator, the slightest sound or shift in scents able to rouse him. Which is why he was so surprised when he woke up to Will already writhing on his cock, leaking slick and whimpering little moans painting the air in the enclosed space.

“Will -” Hannibal rumbled, his voice thick with sleep.

“Had a dream you bred me full of your pups. Everybody who saw me knew I was yours, knew that I’d let you fuck me full up,” Will moaned, tossing his head back and exposing the pale line of his throat, taking his pleasure from Hannibal’s body as he quickened his pace, riding him hard.

“Darling -” Hannibal tried again, but Will fell down atop him and captured his lips in a searing kiss.

“Shh, sweetheart. Let me take what I want,” Will purred, fitting his teeth into their bond mark, biting down hard enough to draw blood again. Hannibal could smell it thick and laden

with pheromones, their arousal nearly cloying in such a tight space.

Something in Hannibal shifted; months of allowances, of deference and gentleness. His inner Alpha was howling for blood, for dominance, and for the first time in far too long, Hannibal allowed himself to succumb to those darker desires.

“No,” he growled, moving so quickly that he knocked the air from Will’s lungs, turning the Omega so that he was underneath him, his slim hips the perfect framework for Hannibal to fit between, his lithe legs falling open on either side of the Alpha’s.

Hannibal didn’t hesitate before sliding back into his mate, taking him at a furious pace that quickly filled their cell with the lewd sounds of Will’s slick body easily accommodating Hannibal. They were a perfect fit, Hannibal thought absently as he drove into his Omega with vicious thrusts, his knot teasing at Will’s rim with every push forward.

“Yes…” Will sighed, a contented Omegan sound slipping from his lips as he blinked his eyes open to take in the sight of his Alpha above him. “Fuck me, Alpha; breed me.”

And Hannibal couldn’t know if the shift up of Will’s hips was intentional or instinctive, a position that would encourage conception if Will had been in heat, but it pushed Hannibal over the edge, desirous with the need to knot and claim his Omega. He bent low to mimic Will’s earlier renewal of their bond, digging his teeth ferociously into Will’s neck until he tasted the sweet copper tang of his blood. He forced his knot into Will seconds later, locking them together as his cock pulsed his release deep inside his mate, Will’s own seed spilling between them and splattering across his abdomen.

Their tie didn’t last long - outside of a fertile heat it was mere minutes - but Hannibal remained inside Will until his cock had gone completely soft and only the tip remained trapped inside Will’s tight heat.

“Is that something you truly want, Will? A family?” Hannibal asked in the afterglow, pulling the Omega even closer, sharing breath and skin and secrets between them.

“No,” Will answered immediately, before pausing contemplatively. “Well, I never did before you. I’m not sure that I still don’t care for it, but it’s less scary with you. Never thought I’d amount to much as a parent. I lived my whole life thinkin’ my mama just up and left us. Was raised hearin’ ‘bout what a bad Omega she was. Always been terrified I’d end up the same…” Will spoke softly, the subject clearly a difficult one.

“And now?” Hannibal purred, leaning even closer to lick some of the salty tears from his Omega’s cheeks as they spilled from his closed eyes.

“I don’t much care for pups, Hannibal. They’re loud, disruptive, snotty…” he chuckled at the tickling feel of his Alpha’s tongue against his face. “They are also so special. And if I’m honest with myself, this isn’t a life I wanna bring pups into. But I also don’t wanna leave it behind. It’s all I’ve ever known.”

Hannibal knew that Will wasn’t only referring to the criminal enterprise his father had left behind but to the new spark slowly blooming inside of him; a thirst for blood. He’d seen the

pure contentment in Will's eyes after Mason, had felt the fire of his conviction when he discussed ripping his father's throat out. The Omega's monster was different from Hannibal's, but complimentary. The two of them were perfectly matched in every way. Hannibal was eager to encourage Will's bloodlust, watch it evolve into something even more beautiful.

"A life experienced with someone you love can be just as fulfilling for some as a life surrounded by pups and normality. Love was such a foreign concept to me, I still feel it like an ill-fitting coat, but I feel it all the same. I never wanted children, but for you I think I might twist myself into any number of previously uncomfortable or unknown shapes just to see you smile." Will shifted in Hannibal's arms at that, opening his marbled eyes, the gold still streaking through the blue in ribbons of mixed joy and sorrow.

"I'm so glad you fell for me, Icarus." His pink tongue darted out to lick against the mating mark he'd left on Hannibal's neck, tracing it with lips and tongue.

"Sleep, Omega," Hannibal rumbled his pleasure, pulling Will tight enough to squeeze a puff of amused air out of him. Hannibal was sure he was asleep even before his Omega.

"You smell like an Omega." Will wasn't even necessarily trying to embarrass his friend, just stating the fact in surprise, but the color that flooded Bev's cheeks piqued Will's curiosity, made him grin. "Hold on -" Will tipped his head up to sniff again even as Bev pulled away with a huff. "Not just an Omega...a lawyer, maybe?"

Bev dropped into the seat across the table and crossed her arms. "I've said it before and I'll say it again - that scenting thing y'all do is creepy. Never you mind who I smell like."

Will didn't bother attempting to quell his delight. "Why do you smell like Margot Verger, Bev?"

The Beta gave another huff, met his gaze with shining eyes as her cheeks darkened. "Why do you think? Look, I'm not here to discuss sexual conquests," her eyes dropped pointedly to the teeth marks on his own neck - still an angry red even though they'd bonded nearly a month ago; he and Hannibal had fallen into the habit of reopening their bites the moment they seemed to finally begin healing over, an ever-growing need consuming both of them to keep their claims fresh and vivid.

"*Conquests,*" Will repeated, eyebrows climbing higher on his forehead.

"Will, focus. Look, I don't know if there's supposed to be some kind of client confidentiality thing or...whatever. But I know about the appeal plan, and I'm here to tell you that you have to do it."

"Bev -"

"*No,* shut up. I know what it means to you, Will, I do. But it might be your only shot at getting out of here *ever.* I mean you *do* remember that whole 'life without parole' thing,

right?"

"Darlin' -"

Bev pressed through Will's attempts to talk, shaking her head obstinately. "It will work, but only if you push hard as *soon* as Hannibal gets out. You won't get this chance again. If they see that you can survive in here without your mate -"

"*Bev,*" Will hissed. "I'm doin' it, alright? I'm goin' forward with the appeal."

The Beta blinked at him in surprise, clearly expecting much more of a fight on this. She couldn't know that Will had gotten most of that out of his system the night Hannibal had told him.

"So I got strip-searched *again* for nothin'?"

"Not exactly. I wanted to talk to ya anyways. Look, I, uh…" Will cast a casual glance around them and gave as much of a stretch as he could, given his restraints, leaning closer to Bev. "I'm goin' to Baltimore. After. And I'm not comin' back. Not permanently, at least."

He watched as Bev processed this information silently, the furrow between her brows growing with every passing second.

"You've been doin' a great job, and you won't be alone, but I'm leavin' it to you."

Will couldn't have imagined the weight that lifted from his shoulders the moment he spoke those words. Like the spectre of his father had still been hovering over him, suffocating him, and was now banished for eternity.

"I'm not a Graham," Bev pointed out.

"No," Will agreed. "You're better. You're Beverly fuckin' Katz." He was pleased when her lips curled into a smile at that. "And you'll always have me, if you need me, but I don't want all *that* to be my life anymore. I can't."

His best friend cast him a suspicious glance. "You in the family way, Will?"

He flashed his fangs when he chuckled, leaning back in his seat as he shook his head. "No, no. Nothing like that. This isn't about starting a family; it's about ending one."

"You aren't your dad, Will," Bev replied softly. "And you'll never become him, even if -"

"You'll always be family, Bev. You always were, more than him even. But I need to do this. Can I count on you?" He interrupted her, his mind made up after his talk with Hannibal. He wanted to *live*. To experience the world with his mate outside of prison walls.

She glanced away and blinked a few times, no doubt clearing her eyes of the tears that threatened to form, before she turned back to him with her signature smirk.

"Dumbass. Haven't you always?"

Will was sprawled on his bed like a king holding court, leaning his shoulder against the metal frame while Randall paced and Francis stood stoic near the door, occasionally looking out into the hall to make sure they still had privacy. The COs generally frowned on inmates congregating in their cells during the day - they were meant to be out in the prison or outside having recreational time - but Will was tired. Hannibal had kept him up late last night, fucking him mercilessly after he'd returned from his visit with Bev.

"I don't like it, Will," Randal was complaining, the Alpha uncomfortable about the changes Will had informed them of.

He raised a brow at the other man, a slight smirk playing along his lips. "Do you not like it because she's a woman? Or because she's a Beta?"

"What? No!" Randall shouted, before calming himself and lowering his voice. "I'm not a fuckin' sexist, Will." Will knew that, but he just liked riling Randall up sometimes. Francis was smirking from his place leaning against the open cell door.

"I know, I know. I'm only kiddin' ya." He grew serious for a minute, contemplative. "Bev is the closest thing to a sister I got, the only family I have left besides you two idiots. She'll be good for the crew. Level headed, strong-willed. Scary as hell when she wants ta be." The other two men nodded their agreement, they'd all been on the receiving end of Beverly's ire at some point in the years she'd been close to Will.

"I gotta get out, gotta see what else is out there for me." Will ended, swallowing thickly around the emotions that clogged his throat.

"You really love him, huh? Your little Alpha." Francis' grin only grew wider as Will narrowed his eyes at him and grumbled.

"Fuck off, Francis." he paused, unable to help his smile. "You know I do," he stood, pacing in the small room, suddenly concerned about whether any of this would matter if Chilton fucked up his appeal.

"What's wrong, boss?" Randall inquired, taking a seat on the bed to give the Omega more room to pace.

"Chilton. He's takin' a fuckin' shinin' to havin' me as a trophy patient. He threatened me. Threatened to fight my acquittal." The room grew gravely silent and Will glanced up at the two men gathered with him and saw twin looks of malice. Neither of them cared for the psychiatrist, but hearing he'd been threatening Will seemed to cause some visceral reactions in them.

"I don't have time to do shit about it. Margot says it might not matter, but I just can't help but worry he'll fuck it all up." Will sighed, shaking his concerns off and trying to lighten the mood.

"Willy, I can-" Francis started, but Will held up a hand, interrupting him.

“I can’t be involved in anything else, Francis. It’ll be way too suspicious so soon after Mason. And I don’t have any more favors to cash in with Matty. We’ll just have to let it be and hope for the best.”

“Of course, Will. As you say.” Francis’ reply sounded sincere, but Will had a sinking feeling deep in his belly that he’d just signed a man’s death warrant. And it wasn’t Chilton he was worried about.

Sometimes it was better to ask forgiveness than permission. It was a concept Francis had lived his entire life by. His granny hadn’t asked for either when she was beating him and remindin’ him what a disappointment he was. When she was disfiguring him.

The Universe hadn’t asked either when it had decided to take both his parents from him in a car crash he was, for some reason, permitted to survive.

So why should he? Will would understand. He was the only family Francis had left; he’d forgive him.

He flexed his shoulders in the chilly air of the empty hallway and looked around himself once more before flipping the little sign by the door to *With a patient.*

He stretched his body out one more time, the monster that dwelled inside of him stirring from its slumber as he pushed open the office door and let it shut echoingly behind him.

As it turned out, Will didn’t need to worry about Chilton throwing a wrench in the proceedings of his appeal. In a rather unfortunate turn of events, Francis ‘The Dragon’ Dolarhyde had seemingly stumbled upon the psychological profile that the psychiatrist had worked up about him upon his transfer to the prison and found that it contained some less-than-flattering speculations. Being that the Alpha was renowned for his quick temper and phenomenal strength, it was of no surprise to anyone that Francis chose to confront Dr. Frederick Chilton regarding this matter. It was just Will’s luck that they discovered several patient files - including his own - had been carelessly knocked into the blazing fireplace during the resulting encounter.

They found pieces of the libelous file on the Dragon scattered throughout the Beta’s office, intermixed with pieces of the man that had written it. Francis had strolled from the room, easy as you please, tracking a breadcrumb trail of blood behind him and had been apprehended halfway to the showers. He’d been in solitary ever since, awaiting the decision of the court as they deliberated between transferring him to another facility or calling the damage done and lesson learned and leaving him where he was, certain to warn the next psychiatrist to take up residence at the prison.

Will had been furious at first, and Hannibal had watched as his mate stormed back and forth across the length of their cell, cursing the absent Alpha for his disobedience. His rage had quelled quickly enough, his fondness for his old friend breaking to the surface eventually and

making Will more emotional than Hannibal had ever seen as he contemplated Francis' sacrifice.

Will worried that Francis had become such a nuisance that the court would finally impose the death sentence for this particular murder just to get him out of the way. Hannibal did his best to soothe his mate, nuzzling and scenting him until Will relented and curled into the protection of Hannibal's arms. He did not promise Will that his fears would not come true - though he desperately wanted to - lest fate make him a liar.

Without Mason around, day to day life within the prison was monotonous. Between that, affection-soaked nights with his Omega, and an end in sight, the final months of Hannibal's sentence swept by surprisingly quickly. Margot had done a marvelous job reminding the court of Hannibal's upstanding reputation and career in Baltimore, effectively shaming them for condemning him due to an act of self-defense and strengthening his position as Will's keeper in one fell swoop.

Though he would never admit it, Will's anxiety grew as winter waned and spring burst forth, the sun returning, the chilled air of the prison evening out to a rather comfortably tepid temperature. The sun rose earlier, shone longer, with each passing day, and apart from their necessary meetings with Margot - and Will, with Bev - which they needed to attend alone, Will did not let Hannibal out of his sight.

He was a constant presence, not that Hannibal was complaining about it; glued to his side to satisfy his emotional need for proximity during daylight hours and pouncing upon Hannibal the moment their door slammed closed in the evening to satisfy his carnal hunger. Up until his final night in prison, Hannibal had done his best not to ruminate on the upcoming days without his mate, however numbered Margot swore they would be. But when that door slammed closed - the last time *he* would hear it - and Will turned toward him with sad, haunted eyes, Hannibal couldn't deny the heavy weight that had settled in his chest.

Will slid out of his uniform silently, his endlessly blue eyes locked upon his Alpha's, and Hannibal did the same, reaching for his Omega when they were both bare. They came together slowly, with a hesitance between them that had never before existed, erasing the space with every movement until they were pressed flesh to flesh, atom to atom. They pressed their cheeks together - Hannibal graciously ignored the wetness on Will's - and breathed deep each other's scent.

For the first time since they'd first bonded the threat of loneliness loomed heavily over them, a choking fog that settled over everything in the room. Will was the first to give a desperate mewl of distress and Hannibal's Alpha howled its displeasure in the chambers of his memory palace, discontent with the threat of separation.

Will's eyes were a wet, shining seaglass, the color of an ocean tempest. The color of sorrow. Hannibal returned his aching cry of unease, pulling his mate into the little nest they'd made together over the last few days, stealing away towels from the laundry, pulling the mattresses back off the beds and piling the nest with their blankets and pillows. It was still a meager offering compared to what Hannibal would provide for them on the outside, but it was *theirs* and in this moment of seeking comfort, he could think of no better place for them to spend

their night. He refused to consider it their *last night*. He would have his sweet Omega back in his arms soon enough.

“I love you,” Will whimpered against Hannibal’s kiss-swollen lips, and Hannibal cradled him even closer and stole the air from his lungs as he pulled them both down into the nest, becoming lost in one another for several long moments.

“I want to see you, darling. On your back so I can worship you as you deserve,” Hannibal spoke with a reverence that he’d never felt for another living being. Not even some of his favorite musical compositions or most loved works of art had ever evoked such passion within him.

Will laughed a watery laugh, one of his sharp Omegan fangs catching on his lip. “You’re gonna do that creepy memory palace thing aren’t ya, baby?” He teased, leaning up to capture Hannibal’s lips before he could even answer. They’d discussed Hannibal’s memory palace in great detail, especially when Hannibal had suggested a few days ago that he simply not accept his appeal and stay with Will in prison.

He’d told the Omega all about how he had already been content with his sentence because he could simply spend the time sequestered away in his memory palace, walking the halls of his fondest memories for as long as necessary. Will had been curious, but also angry, refusing to speak to Hannibal again for several hours while he sulked in the laundry, not allowing his Alpha entry for work duty much to Officer Brown’s dismay.

They’d made up that night, Will riding Hannibal hard and fast enough to leave them both aching and breathless. Nothing like the easy, gentle lovemaking Hannibal had planned for them tonight.

Will was smirking up at him from his comfortable sprawl on the blankets and the Omega leaned up to lick playfully at Hannibal’s chin before trailing his tongue all along their bond mark, fully wetting it with his saliva before biting deep enough to draw blood. “Fill me up, Alpha, so everyone knows we belong to each other and I’m still feeling you for days after -“ he stopped himself, a small frown pulling at his lips when he was reminded that this was their last night.

Hannibal didn’t allow him to settle too long in that sadness, a low, pleased rumble vibrating through his chest as he spread Will’s thighs and took his place between them, rutting against his slick-soaked hole, his Omega’s body parting accommodatingly for its Alpha.

The fond glow didn’t leave Will’s eyes, even as it was joined by the swirling galaxy of gold shooting across the bright blue, a look Hannibal could not recall ever having received from another in his long life.

“I love you,” He pressed the words into Will’s shoulder, into his neck as he fit his mouth around the Omega’s healing bond mark and bit down, filling his mouth with warm red, straining his teeth and chin as he sank his fangs deeper, wanting there to be no question as to who his Omega belonged to.

When he pulled away with blood still dripping from his mouth, Will gasped in surprised awe, his pupils dilating further. Hannibal imagined he must look more like the monster that resided within him than a man, a creature that, even now, Will had not yet fully seen. He didn't soften his features, allowing his mate to *see* him in a way far more intimate than any other ever had. To know him completely.

Will lunged forward to kiss the red from Hannibal's lips, purring in contentment as he licked up his own blood with a pleased sigh. Hannibal could taste the mingled flavors of their individual pheromones, sweet and spicy and still heavy with memories of comfortable autumns and wood fires.

"Harder," Will keened, arching his entire body up in a sharp bow, his spine coming up off the nest as he pushed himself closer against Hannibal, trying to take him deeper even before Hannibal started to thrust harder, marveling at how beautifully his Omega took him.

It didn't take long for his knot to start pressing against Will's rim, the man writhing below him and grinding his hips down in an effort to push it inside. Hannibal didn't tease him for long, allowing his knot to slip into his mate's wet heat with a final, hard thrust forward, knotting him and filling him with his seed as his cock pulsed nearly violently inside of his Omega.

Hannibal wrapped his hand around Will's pink cock, his head wet at the tip, and within a few strokes he was coming all across his stomach, his eyes slamming open so that he could look directly into Hannibal's as he moaned out his Alpha's name and shuddered in post-orgasmic bliss.

They lay tied for several minutes before Hannibal's knot deflated enough to slip out, trailing their combined, sticky fluids with it. Will didn't seem to care, only curling himself closer to his Alpha and nuzzling into his chest, licking absently near one of Hannibal's nipples, scenting his mate.

"I will return for you, Will. In one capacity or another," Hannibal vowed, pulling his Omega tight to his chest and scenting his curls with a rub of his cheek. He knew Will believed him. They'd discussed the what ifs. Hannibal would kill all of Louisiana if he must in order to get to his mate.

When they slept, much later in the early hours of the morning, the sun already clawing fire red fingers against the floor of their cell, Hannibal imagined he could smell burning wings and wax as he let his eyes slip closed to the soft sounds of his Omega's breathing.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

If you enjoy our collaborative works you should follow us on Twitter and Tumblr for all sorts of extra content and teasers!

We also have a Discord server where you can chat with us, throw us prompts, and post images/art inspired by our work! You may also catch a snippet or two of some WIPs!

'Til next time! 💚💜 BellaRai

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Hannibal felt Will’s absence as though a piece of himself was missing. Will called him every day, his voice a balm to the ever-present simmering distress that Hannibal suspected was not entirely his own.

Chapter Notes

Notes:

Thank you so much to everyone that took this journey with us! The response to this fic has just been phenomenal and we want to let you all know how much we appreciate your kudos, comments and time!

Be sure to check us out on social media if you haven't already (links in the bottom notes) to stay updated with our other projects. Rest assured, you have not seen the last of this bossy little Omega and his lovestruck Alpha!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The weeks following Hannibal’s release were fraught with a seemingly endless list of tasks. Margot had been kind enough to remove any perishables from his fridge and pantry, but the rest of his home had suffered in his absence. Perhaps he should have sent along a service to tarp the furniture; a fine layer of dust had settled over *everything.* Hannibal spent his first week of freedom scrubbing and cleaning.

There was also the matter of damage control vis-a-vis his social circle and psychiatric practice. Being convicted of murder and then disappearing for a year tended to draw the wrong sort of attention. He had certainly gifted the upper crust with a myriad of gossip. In the end, it was all too easy to manipulate his way right back to the center of the circle - regaling his patients and acquaintances with the injustice of being convicted for acting in self-defense, followed by the harrowing experience of being locked away with the fiendish scum that truly belonged there.

The intrigue of Hannibal having taken a mate during that time certainly assisted in drawing the sheep back to him. Though he hardly needed an excuse to throw a dinner party, the demands to meet his Omega were certainly reason enough. He began preliminary plans, checking in with Margot to obtain the status of Will’s case every few days.

Hannibal felt Will's absence as though a piece of himself was missing. Will called him every day, his voice a balm to the ever-present simmering distress that Hannibal suspected was not entirely his own.

Three weeks after his release, Will joined him in freedom.

Hannibal was beautiful. Will had, of course, noticed that his Alpha was attractive in a very classic, chiseled way. A dignified man with the hands of an artist and eyes the color of whiskey on ice.

But in the days since Will had been released, since his mate had been waiting for him right outside of the prison gates, Will had been unable to ignore how beautiful he was. Not only because Will was seeing him with fresh, free eyes, but just because everything about Hannibal called to him, soothed him.

Watching the Alpha move around the kitchen like it was a dance floor was causing fluttering feelings to rise up in Will's belly, slick accumulating uncomfortably between his thighs that he was steadfastly ignoring as he shifted anxiously from foot to foot. He was *nervous* in a way he had never been nervous before. Not when he presented. Not when he killed his daddy. Not even when he'd been sentenced to life, or when his mate had been taken from him for the last time. He wasn't a social creature, the majority of his experience in situations such as this had been with criminals, men who were powerful and proud and Will knew how to act around them. Knew what was expected.

"You look absolutely splendid, my love," Hannibal assured him as he fussed with the line of his tailored suit for the third time in as many minutes, his hip cocked against the marble countertops for balance.

Hannibal guided him until they were standing in front of the hall mirror, the heat of him firm and strong at his back. Will made a dismissive noise in his throat, hesitating as he hovered in front of the large mirror. When Will finally dragged his eyes to look at their reflections, all he saw for several seconds were the proud, shining eyes of his mate as he took him in. Hannibal wasn't even looking at himself, he was gazing intently at Will, nothing but adoration and longing on his face.

"They will adore you, darling. Just as I do. How could they not?" he smoothed his own, much larger hands down Will's sides, pulling his pocket handkerchief into a perfect, cream-white angle before letting his hands linger far longer than necessary as he traced the lines of Will's perfectly fitted suit, pausing at his hips.

"I'm not like them," Will admitted softly, meeting his own gaze in the mirror reluctantly.

His mate surprised him with a short, amused sound before he pulled away. "Nonsense. You can be like anyone; that's part of your gift." Will couldn't argue that; Hannibal had a point, after all. "In any case, you need only be yourself. They will see your irrefutable charm or I shall never speak to them again."

And that, it seemed, was that; Will's final pep talk before Hannibal's concentration went back to his final preparations and the guests began to arrive.

Will used his influence as the host's mate to *strongly urge* the waitstaff to keep the libations flowing to the guests, hoping, at least, that if he got them liquored up enough, he could relax a little bit rather than struggle under the weight of his empathy to reflect the posh socialite personas that would be invading their home for the evening. Even before prison, Will had only had to concern himself with his family hosting mostly criminals - and even then, he was young enough to be a silent presence, there to observe rather than entertain. In prison, Will had let all manner of proper decorum slip from his wheelhouse; propriety was not a trait commonly valued among convicted felons.

As it turned out, the marvel of Will's presence existed less at the fact that Hannibal had taken a convict for a mate, but that Hannibal had taken a mate *at all*. It seemed his Alpha was widely known amongst the Baltimore elite as a serial bachelor; the worst crime of all: an Alpha that exceeded physical, intellectual and social standards that had, seemingly, refused to consider even a platonic mating that could benefit two individuals, even in an aromantic sense.

Will's confidence surged when he learned this, his chest puffing out instinctively as he preened at the praise these strangers bestowed upon him simply for existing and catching the interest of his Alpha.

"Now, I understand that you've only recently been released yourself, dear," the frail woman with a severe bob - Mrs. Komeda, he was fairly certain her name was - intoned lowly as she leaned conspiratorially closer to him. Will braced himself for the inevitable inquiry - the one which no guest had been brave enough to pose so far - as to *how* exactly he had found himself in prison, but the woman surprised him, turning a coy smirk his way and stating, "You look like a clever little thing; must be, if you've caught our dear Hannibal's attention. What are your plans now that you're back on the outside?"

Will froze, having predicted just about every question that might have been thrown his way *besides* one so seemingly innocuous.

He had no plan, if he was honest, beyond just existing and being happy with his mate. He knew that wouldn't keep forever, knew that he would need to have *something* to occupy his time. He was not the type of Omega to be kept barefoot and bred while his Alpha played the role of sole provider. He just...hadn't quite thought that far ahead.

He was saved from his floundering non-response by the arrival of another woman, tall and slim with her shining blonde locks styled into a flawless coif. "Well," she began in a confident drawl, as though not at all concerned that she may be interrupting a conversation. "This must be the illustrious *mate* we've heard so much about."

The title slipped from her tongue as though she couldn't quite believe she was saying it. Will felt his hackles rise immediately, though he forced himself to mirror the stranger's easy stance and cool demeanor.

“Bedelia,” Mrs. Komeda greeted - not half as warmly as she had greeted Will, he noted. “Meet Will Graham; an absolutely *charming* young man, and Hannibal’s darling mate. “Will, Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier; a fellow colleague of Hannibal’s.”

“Charmed,” the Omega purred with a tip of her head, declining to extend her hand to him. He noted the way her lips tightened as the title of *colleague* was attributed, and had to wonder if the lovely Bedelia had ever hoped to be *more* than that. “I do hope I’m not interrupting,” she lied amicably.

“I was just asking dear Will here what his plans were, now that he’s settled into life in Baltimore.”

Will cast a slightly sheepish smile over his mouth, refusing to appear uncertain in front the Omega before him even as he answered, “I’m afraid I’ve not quite figured that out yet, ma’am. Though I’ve been considering studying up on criminal justice and pathologies.”

“My darling hopes to catch killers,” Hannibal purred, slipping a reassuring arm around Will’s waist as he appeared at his side; Will relaxed into his hold immediately, didn’t miss the way the blonde’s eyes fell to Hannibal’s hand upon his hip. “To be able to assist in putting behind bars those that *truly* deserve it.”

“How admirable!” Mrs. Komeda proclaimed, beaming first at Will and then at Hannibal.

“Indeed,” Bedelia agreed with a sharp smile. “Who better to know what filth to put behind bars than one who has lived the experience?”

Will felt like a bucket of cold rain water had been poured down his spine, and it only urged him to pull his body up even straighter. He towered over her, even in her heels, and he wondered if she kept her heels shorter in height to maintain the facsimile of a small, demure Omega.

He wasn’t so petty that he couldn’t see behind the veil Bedelia surrounded herself with, that he didn’t see the sharpness of her angles. An unattached, lovely Omega was nearly as unheard of, if not far less common, than an affluent Alpha such as Hannibal remaining unmated. Her chosen field of psychiatry made her even more atypical, and Will wondered if that were purposeful. He imagined a woman such as she would struggle with the idea of people placing her in a box, expecting things from her.

He wasn’t petty, but he was certainly unamused. *Jealous*, he was able to admit, though his Omega didn’t allow him to have that hold the acid that dripped from his tongue. “Unfortunate, then, that our system so often fails inmates. Hannibal and myself are only two examples of people unfairly incarcerated. Some, even, at the behest of court-mandated psychiatrists with lazy practices.”

She ignored the clear jab, maneuvering as gracefully through the conversation as she did around the room. “I heard about our colleague, the late Dr. Chilton. What an eventful year you’ve had.”

“Dr. Chilton, unfortunately, was frightfully lax when it came to the storage of his patient files. An unstable one discovered his own and, predictably, did not favor what the good doctor had to say about him,” Hannibal cut in, nuzzling just a bit closer to Will briefly before turning his attention to the room at large. “If everyone would be so kind as to find their places at the table, dinner will be served shortly.”

He dipped his lips down to Will’s ear unabashedly in the midst of their present company. “Would you please assist me in the kitchen before we begin, darling?”

Will nodded against his mate’s cheek, letting his eyes slip closed as they *very publicly* scented one another. When his eyes opened again, he was more than a little pleased to note that Bedelia’s eyes still remained on them. He shot her his most cheerful grin, his granny had taught him before she’d passed how to be polite even when he hated a person, and then he followed Hannibal to the kitchen.

He barely noticed the staff that navigated the large space, every moment pressed so close to his Alpha felt as intimate as their own little universe.

“I’m sorry, Icarus,” he mumbled into Hannibal’s neck, licking a small swipe against his mating mark there.

“You’ve nothing to apologize for, my love. Bedelia was exceptionally rude. You are performing beautifully, just as I knew you would,” the implication hung in the air between them, almost like an offering. Bedelia *had* been rude, hadn’t she? And his wonderful mate detested the rude just as much as Will hated people with inflated egos.

“How long have you been seeing a therapist?” he asked, letting the other threads of the conversation rest in subtext for now. Perhaps he would bring it up again at another time, with a more level-head. He couldn’t deny that the idea of hunting with his Alpha appealed to his baser instincts.

“Since I became one, myself.” Hannibal replied simply, dragging his nose through Will’s tousled curls and smirking against his temple as though he knew where Will’s thoughts resided.

“I don’t think I’d like it. Havin’ a stranger diggin’ ‘round in my head,” he pulled away slightly, looking into Hannibal’s eyes just to see the glint of mischief still residing there. He could smell it, could *feel* it like it was his own; his Alpha was pleased with him, including his dislike towards the other Omega.

“You seem to be perfectly alright having me in your head,” Hannibal commented with a hum, stepping back to look over the preparations spread out on the countertop. And most likely, Will noted, trying to put some polite distance between them.

“Like you inside me about as much as I think you’ll like me inside of you, darlin’,” Will purred into Hannibal’s neck as he closed the distance between them again, spreading himself out flat against Hannibal’s back, hands on his hips as the Alpha’s breath caught in his throat.

Will could feel his mate's purr rumbling whisper-quiet through his torso. "That turn you on, baby?" Will questioned coyly as he nuzzled against the mark that made him *Will's*. "You like thinking about me inside you?"

"You occupy every other part of me," Hannibal replied, diplomatic as ever as he fussed with the arrangement of some food styled into the shape of a rose on a platter before him. "A sensation as unexpected as it is unfamiliar. I imagine your claiming that last bit of me will be just as such; unknown, but not unwanted, as all others have been before you."

Will purred and mouthed at his mate's neck - uncaring of the remaining staff whose eyes might inevitably settle upon them - lazy and wet kisses up the column of Hannibal's throat to his ear, where he licked playfully at the shell of it before placing his lips right over the opening. "Darlin', I'm gonna make you feel so good you're gonna forget there was *anyone* before me. Trust me."

"I do," his mate replied on a breath, and Will knew that he wasn't lying, could feel it in the core of him.

"Let's not leave our guests waitin', baby," Will suggested with a soft swat to his lover's backside as he pulled away. "Food's gettin' cold."

Will lingered in the doorway to the en suite, admiring the long line of his mate stretched out on their bed. They had forgotten to draw the curtains the night before - too distracted - and Will couldn't help but think that he'd never seen a more beautiful sight than his Alpha bathed in the soft glow of the rising sun. He had rolled over when Will had slipped from his grasp, rested now on his stomach with his face buried in Will's pillow.

Will never thought it possible for his heart to ache from *happiness.* His time inside had never been a particular hardship, had been made all the easier with Hannibal at his side. But the last few weeks - possessing a freedom that he had written off as lost to him at only seventeen, and with a mate that fit against his own jagged edges so effortlessly… Will could never have dreamed at having this kind of happiness.

He loved all of Hannibal, all variations and versions of him. He'd enjoyed sharing his mate with others the night before at dinner, had been proud of how well the Alpha maneuvered through social niceties. But this version, the truth of the monster beneath, the most honest form of Hannibal, this was his favorite. Soft and sleep-rumpled, resting peacefully while he waited for his Omega to return to him.

His favorite, he was sure, until they inevitably hunted together for the first time. His Alpha's purest nature rising to the surface in all its unholy glory, Will's own monster stirring slightly in his belly just at the thought of its mate bathed in blood and moonlight.

Will padded back over to the bed, clambering onto it at the foot and climbing up the length of his Alpha to sprawl over his back. Will sighed at the heat of Hannibal's sleep-warmed skin, nuzzled and nibbled at the mark that proved that he was Will's, until his mate began to stir for him. He petted down his lover's flanks and rutted his hips lazily against the soft swell of his

ass; his fingers halted when they brushed over the puckered skin of Hannibal's scar, traced over the crudely drawn shape tenderly.

Starting at the base of his neck, Will placed soft kisses down the curve of Hannibal's spine, even as the Alpha rumbled a morning greeting to him. Hannibal tensed when Will's lips met Mason's brand, and Will was quick to soothe him with a purr and more soft pets as he nuzzled the area.

"Let me finish it," he entreated softly, lips moving against Hannibal's skin. "Let me make it mine."

Hannibal couldn't stop the shudder that rolled through him, his body going lax beneath his boy's hands and teeth and tongue.

He nodded, nuzzling into the sheets beneath him as Will's breath moved down, teasing against ever more intimate places until his Omega spread his cheeks and blew soft puffs of air against Hannibal's exposed hole.

"Let me claim you fully," Will continued on a growl, dipping down to let his tongue lathe across Hannibal's rim, leaving a warm wet stripe of saliva when he finally pulled away.

It wasn't totally unheard of for Alphas to allow this, to even enjoy it, but hedonist though he was, Hannibal had rarely been the receiving partner, and certainly not since the days of his youth when he'd worn his charm and cherubic looks like armor, drawing in men with coy coaxing before consuming them wholly. He didn't even allow a passing thought to Mason's terrorizing antics during their time together.

Hannibal spread his legs accommodatingly, not needing words to express his interest and approval. Will spent several long minutes getting Hannibal soaked with spit, Alphas didn't produce slick so they'd need either artificial slick or to use some of Will's own as they had in prison in order to smooth the way.

He didn't need to wait long to determine which it would be as he heard the lewd sounds of Will fingering himself behind him. Hannibal didn't turn, kept himself presented and lax on the bed, releasing his muscles slowly and relieving the tension from his body.

"Gonna make sure everybody knows who you belong to," Will purred against Hannibal's shoulder before biting down harshly, sharp Omegan fangs sinking in enough to draw blood that bloomed bright and copper-tanged on the air. Hannibal's lips pulled back to expose his teeth as he snarled his pleasure at the same moment Will decided to sink one finger into him up to the knuckle.

"Wanna fuck you while I cut my mark into your skin. Can I, baby? Make a place for myself deep inside while I mark you up as mine?"

Hannibal's Alpha howled, snarling and vicious in the confines of his mind, desperate for its mate. "Please," he managed to pant out, spreading even wider to make space for Will.

Will stretched out above Hannibal with his free hand, all lithe and lean, and slid a knife from under his pillow. Hannibal knew Will was still having some issues adjusting to being out of prison, knew his mate often felt too exposed in such large, sprawling spaces and without immovable locks on the doors - he'd not shared Hannibal's experience as to how fallible even prison locks could be, after all.

As an Alpha, the lack of faith in his ability to protect his mate stung, left the bitter taste of inadequacy lurking in his mouth. As a fellow inmate - despite his time served being less than Will's by more than half - Hannibal understood the sentiment.

Will slid a second finger into Hannibal, setting the knife off to the side of them and leaning down to nuzzle into the crook of Hannibal's neck. "Gonna fill you up so good, Icarus," his mate murmured into his flesh as his fingers spread and stretched him, "Gonna make you fly."

A third finger - added perhaps a bit too hastily, though he was loathe to point that out - had Hannibal rumbling with need, hips gyrating instinctively to accommodate the intrusion, to give it a place inside him. "I fly whenever I am in your presence, my love," Hannibal informed his mate, if not a bit breathlessly. "Drawn ever onward toward my sun, regardless of the danger, knowing I will fall -" A gasp, followed by a moan as Will's fingers dragged deliberately over his prostate.

Will's lips at the shell of his ear, hot breath washing over him, the vibrations of his low murmur inciting a shiver. "I'll catch you, then," his Omega promised, removed his fingers and replaced them with his cock instead, pressing forward until the length of him was buried as deep as possible.

Their moans left their throats together - Hannibal's a low, enduring sound, Will's a higher, throaty whine; the noises erupted into the still air around them, twined together in all the ways that the two were already conjoined. Will stilled for a moment, rolled his hips to pull out slightly and push back in just as quickly.

"Oh - *fuck* baby," Will panted, thrust gently into him once more. "Feel so good, darlin'," he moaned, set a steady pace as he mouthed at Hannibal's bond mark.

Hannibal's breath caught in his throat, even as he worked his hips to meet Will's thrusts. He forced himself to relax, to breathe in the scent of his mate surrounding him and reminded himself that this was okay, this was safe. He was safe with Will.

The comforting weight of Will's torso left his back as the Omega reared up, thrusts shifting to a tortuously slow, rhythmic undulation as he grasped frantically for the knife left beside them. He brought the blade to Hannibal's back, murmuring a soft litany of praise as the sharp edge dug into him, split his flesh apart and dragged to leave a burning trail in its wake. Hannibal grit his teeth and took a slow, steadying breath, even as his Alpha snarled at the vulnerability he was displaying, the damage he was allowing. Two cuts to prove to Will that he belonged to his mate entirely. He would allow a thousand to see him content.

Will cut him with the calm, ease and experience of a man accustomed to handling a blade. That easy familiarity didn't stop the doctor in Hannibal from reminding him: "You need to make them deep enough to scar, my love."

“Hannibal, I’ve been guttin’ fish since I was a boy barely big enough to see over the side of the boat,” he breathed out a laugh and emphasized his prowess with another sharp thrust of his hips and another quick flick of the blade, his weight enough at Hannibal’s back that his belly was pressed flush to the mattress.

And once his two lines were added, he went back in and cut over them again - tracing over the two older lines as well for good measure - this time far deeper, deep enough that Hannibal could feel the blood well up around the tip of the blade and roll heavy and wet down his flank.

Hannibal whimpered and tossed his head back in pleasure, exposing the long column of his throat, struggling slightly as he writhed on Will’s cock.

“Ain’t finished with you yet, sweetheart.” Will tossed the blade and reached around to wrap his small palm around the front of Hannibal’s neck, using his hold to pull him even closer, their bodies pressed tight together as Will deepened his thrusts but also slowed them, keeping Hannibal full and keeping Will’s cock sheathed deep in his warmth.

“Gonna fill you up, darlin’. Gonna paint up your insides to match my marks on the outside.” Will used the fingers of his free hand to swipe through the sluggishly leaking blood of Hannibal’s mark, his other hand tightening ever so slightly around the Alpha’s throat.

Hannibal’s vision went nearly black as his eyes were flooded scarlet and he made a desperate keening sound as his cock twitched and he came against the bedsheets. Will moved his hand to Hannibal’s still pulsing cock, working over his length with fast, controlled jerking motions that kept Hannibal coming for longer than he usually did without a knot.

“You ready for me, sweetheart? Ready to be all mine?” Will growled and set his teeth into Hannibal’s mating mark again, filling his mouth with more of his Alpha’s blood.

“I’ve been yours since the first day we met, Will.” He could feel Will tense and bite down harder, on the precipice of his orgasm. “Show me that I’m yours. Come in me, Will. Please, fill me up,” he coaxed, knowing his mate loved to hear him desperate and begging.

Will made a soft sound of near surprise as his entire body shook with the force of his orgasm, his cock twitching pleasantly inside of Hannibal, the movement stretching his abused rim out in a burning flash of pain that quickly morphed into more pleasure as his Omega began licking along Hannibal’s bleeding bond mark and the back of his neck, covered in a fine sheen of sweat that had his hair clinging to his skin.

“Such a good Alpha,” Will murmured into Hannibal’s damp hair, nuzzling against him tenderly.

Hannibal preened at the praise, found his limbs weak and lax with pleasure and let the weight of himself sink fully into dark, silk sheets, supported sturdily by his mate. Will rumbled a purr at his satisfaction and wrapped his arms around Hannibal’s torso, tipping them to their sides and curling up tightly against his back.

“We should clean the wound,” Hannibal pointed out with a sigh, even as he sank further into the bed, into Will’s arms, into the scent that the two of them produced when they were together and happy.

He felt Will nod against his back, felt his lips press to the top of Hannibal’s shoulder, trail down the sharp edge of his scapula. “In a minute, baby. Lemme just hold you for a bit.”

One minute stretched to five, to ten. They laid together in contented silence, the sounds of their deep, even breaths the only thing to break the stillness until Will buried his nose into Hannibal’s hair and spoke again.

“I never thought I’d get this. With you or with anyone. I never thought I’d have a life that was my own again. Never dreamed that I could escape that place, but I did. *We* did.”

He felt Will’s fingers trail over the blood smeared across his flanks, growing tacky as it dried. They ghosted over the mark Will had made for him, claimed as his own, with a gentle, reverent touch.

“All the better not to have done so on wings of wax and feathers,” Hannibal mused aloud. He gave a thoughtful hum. “Perhaps Daedalus and Icarus should have instead attempted an appeal.”

The laughter of his mate was the sweetest of sounds.

Chapter End Notes

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'Til next time! <3

End Notes

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